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# ***How AMERICA Lives***





# *How* AMERICA *Lives*

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by

J. C. FURNAS

and the staff of the *Ladies' Home Journal*

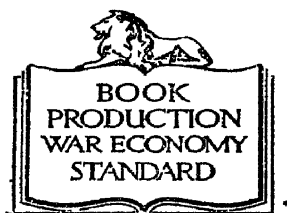
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LONDON

John Lane The Bodley Head

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This is perhaps the most completely American book to be published in this country. It is the American picture in an all-American frame—and it should not be otherwise. The publishers therefore have not wished to 'anglicize' the text on this occasion; nevertheless there were certain words and phrases which, finally, have had to be 'transliterated' in order that the sense might be really understood. But, by and large, it has been preferred to leave the American idiom to speak for itself.

For easy and at the same time reasonably accurate comparison, the British reader is recommended to regard the dollar (\$) as worth five shillings (5s.) sterling. Hence a 'quarter' would be approximately worth 1s. 3d., a 'dime' 6d., and a 'nickel' 3d.

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## THE FAMILIES AND THE IDEA

A YEAR or so ago the editors of the *Ladies' Home Journal*, Bruce and Beatrice Gould, returned from a holiday, and it was then that I first heard of the idea for the *Journal's* 'How America Lives' series. I haven't heard of much of anything else since, for it has absorbed most of my time and energies.

We called the series 'How America Lives'—but, as you will see as you read this book, it might just as well have been called 'How Do People Get Along?' The *Journal* staff who have written this book learned about it everywhere, from the cabin of a black Mississippi sharecropper to the mansion of a bluff Chicago millionaire, and in a dozen other places between.

The fundamental idea, like most good ideas, was simple and forthright. We would not be content to study and synthesize statistics and reports. Nor would we be guided by the documents of experts. We would make full use of all these things, without illusion or prejudice. But then we would go to the people who make up this nation and ask them to take us into their confidence—and into their homes. We would ask them to tell us and, at the same time, to let us see for ourselves. To trust us and let us write it as we saw it. We would do all this in the spirit of sympathetic seekers after information.

We have held to that idea, scrupulously and patiently. The only impatience we have allowed ourselves is with the kind of people who are only interested in proving something which they already believe; the kind of people who already *know* what just isn't so—that most of the poor are shiftless and ignorant, that most of the rich are

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cruel and dissolute; that this is the best of all possible worlds; that the world is going to hell.

I doubt that even the readers of the *Journal* who have followed this series from its beginning in February, 1940, have realized the magnitude of the effort that went into it. It has meant transferring a staff of from ten to twelve persons, reporters, writers, department editors, and photographers to a different city or town every month. I myself have travelled by train, by plane, by car, and on foot 31,500 miles to every corner of the country. All this to find out how Americans make their money and how they spend it; how they bring up their children; how they love and quarrel and what they dream about; the size of the weekly pay cheque, how much they still owe on the car; what the insurance premiums amount to, and how they came to fall in love in the first place.

I won't go into the statistical background which preceded the selection of the families so that they would represent a true cross-section of American family life according to income groups and geographical distribution, population density and relative costs of living in different parts of the country. The important thing is that these statistics were translated into the stories of the lives of men, women, and children, the warmly human incidents of their daily living; the little events and the big decisions that they, like all the rest of us, have to make from one day to the next.

As the managing editor in charge of the job, one of the things that everybody asks me sooner or later is 'How did you find the families?' And then when I have told them that, 'How did you get them to tell you all about themselves?'

The answer to the first question is that we reduced a welter of Department of Commerce and National Resources Board statistics to a scientific set of vital

## THE FAMILIES AND THE IDEA

requirements. These requirements, or prescriptions, stated the income, age, number of children, occupation—in short, all the factors that combine to create a typical family within a given income, occupation, and population bracket. Then, when I dropped out of the sky into a quiet and unsuspecting community to select the family, I had a background of statistical data that would have made an insurance actuary blink. I enlisted the local newspaper editor, the chamber of commerce secretary, and any other citizen who might be expected to know all about the home town. What I wanted to know was who in the community really represented it within the scope of the prescription. Thus I would get a list of prospective candidates. The next step was to go out and ring doorbells and winnow out the possible candidates from the standpoint of personality and problems in living.

At this point the answer to the question 'How do you find them?' begins to overlap with the question 'How do you get them to tell you all about themselves?' My reception was almost always warm and friendly, especially the time I rang the doorbell of a Fuller brush man. (He sold me a brush.) After I made them understand that I wasn't selling subscriptions to the *Ladies' Home Journal*, that I was in the editorial department and that I wanted to talk to them about themselves, I found them not at all reticent. As time went on, I realized more and more that most of us live our lives as a story. We are thrilled by it, and eager to tell it to a sympathetic listener. Americans are incurably romantic. They love to relive their experiences by telling them—the day they were married; the automobile accident that put John in bed for six months and in debt for six years; and so on. Albums would be pulled out and half-forgotten adventures and escapades and sorrows recalled.

My doorbell-ringing expeditions were spiced with

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plenty of amusing incidents. There was the department store owner who told me that the first time he met his wife was when he was a young dry goods clerk and sold her a pair of corsets. As a matter of fact, judging by the families in this series, most of the married couples in America met by chance. As far as romance that leads to marriage is concerned, the formal introduction is a total loss. Then there was the recently married and very modern young couple who were earnestly debating whether they should have a baby on an income of \$33 a week, or wait. (They voted for the baby—you will read about it in the Theodore Chases' chapter.)

For the family which I finally selected in each community there was a little period of calm while I returned to Philadelphia. It was the calm before the storm. For when I returned within a couple of weeks I was accompanied by the first relay of *Journal* editors, writers, and photographers. The advance guard always included J. C. Furnas, leader writer, and Martin Munkacsi, photographer, and myself.

It isn't hard to imagine what a family's house looked like while we were working in it. I shall never forget the scene at Dallas, Texas, when we were doing the Guthrie story, which you will find on page 47. A week's steady downpour had delayed things and made us concentrate all our efforts indoors. There was one mad day when I shook my head to clear it and paused to survey the whole scene. In the living room Mrs. Guthrie, a delightful easygoing Southern matron, was stretched out on the couch patiently answering Furnas's interminable and penetrating questions; in the middle of the floor Sonny, the 15-year-old boy, who had got a little bored by this time, was tossing a football back and forth with a fellow high school junior, meanwhile drawling out to me why he had decided to become an Episcopalian minister. In

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the sunroom adjoining, the *Journal's* garden editor, Richard Pratt, was muttering under his breath and sweating over an indoor garden. In his bedroom Mr. Guthrie, the paterfamilias, was getting into his hunting togs in preparation for a picture showing him in one of his characteristic manifestations—returning home triumphant holding aloft a very dead wild turkey. In the kitchen Blumie, the coal-black cook, and her husband, Curtis, houseman, chauffeur, and deacon of the church, were plaintively trying to explain to a visiting brother, 'what all was goin' on heah, anyhow.'

The most distressing, yet the most absorbing, assignment in the series was the underprivileged families. Here, unfortunately, was no opportunity for many of our department editors who worked on the other articles. There was no place for the fashion editor when the problem was how to get enough clothes to keep one covered. The food department could and did work out a series of minimum-cost menus and basic recipes, although, no matter how closely they figured and earnestly they tried, they could not work it down to the level of these substandard incomes.

We selected four families for this article—one to represent a family on home relief; one subsisting on WPA; one still depending upon a greatly curtailed income in a declining private industry; and a southern share-cropper trying to live on 'King Cotton'. We were determined to tell this story without in any way glossing over the fact that poverty is a dreadful thing and that we have entirely too much poverty in this country. And also without resorting to what we had always considered the shabby editorial trick of showing the underprivileged as eternally in the depths of despair and degradation as a means of rousing sympathy in the reader.

Heaven knows that after several weeks of digging into

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the poverty that is so tragically prevalent, I realized how ugly it is—and how it smells. The results of our labours you will find farther on in this book. I think it is a good job.

No phase of this sad assignment can be said to have a humorous aspect. But the coloured sharecroppers, the worst off of all, could contrive to laugh. They made us laugh with them—in their three-room cabin where were seventeen children, from two to twenty, and the parents, in their fifties. There had been a cloudburst on the early spring day I arrived in Mississippi and the earth was a soaked, gumlike mass. There was no sign of life as I plodded through the mud with my galoshes sucked in to the ankles at every step in the direction of the cabin. It stood there silhouetted starkly against a stormy sky, surrounded by acres and acres of bare fields with only a couple of cottonwood trees to break the bleak monotony.

I climbed up on the porch and stuck my head in the door. Through the murk inside I saw them—but they were all in bed. Later I understood why. It was very simple. There was nothing to do outside in such weather. There was no place to sit indoors except on long, backless wooden benches. Their clothes were not enough to keep them warm in the raw cold. So what more sensible thing could they do than go to bed? There wasn't much reason to get up for meals either, as I soon found out. There was nothing in the house to eat except some flour and molasses.

They jumped out of bed when they saw me. I must have looked as strange to them as they did to me. I don't know how I made them understand what I was doing there. I don't think I did, in fact, either then or when I came back a couple of weeks later with other members of the staff. But what set their heads bobbing in enthusiastic agreement was that I was going to take their pictures and not charge them anything. They were impressed by pictures

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because they had one on the wall, an uncle who was a preacher and a big enough man to have his picture taken. I ordered some groceries for them and went away sick at heart. The next time I came the sun was shining brilliantly. Papa Henry Bracey was out doing the spring ploughing behind a pair of the landlord's mules. Mamma Estella Bracey was stirring the family wash in a big iron kettle on an outdoor fire. The children were falling all over each other like puppies at play, and the oldest daughter ambled around doing her chores with a nursing baby balanced on her hip. In contrast with my first visit the scene was idyllic. They hadn't been sullen the first time. They were actually happy now. There was nothing more in the larder this time than there had been when I plodded through the mud a few weeks earlier—the groceries I had provided had long since vanished. It ought to have been grim, but somehow it wasn't.

To return to the upper two-thirds of the nation, some time ago one of our surveys revealed that money was the greatest source of trouble in the American family. Many of us who had believed that jealousy, in-laws, infidelity, and drinking were more important were surprised. But our experience in the 'How America Lives' series has confirmed the fact that nothing gives rise to more controversy than money. As you will see as you read this book, we have carefully studied the budgets of all the families and set them forth as concisely as possible. Nothing we have printed has created more discussion than these budgets. After the publication of the budget of Mrs. Griffin, who, with an income of \$1,960 a year, fed a family of four on \$1 a day, our correspondence department was busy for weeks giving additional evidence that Mrs. Griffin really had done it, albeit without any steaks or chops or fancy desserts on the menu. There were many and loud protests that it couldn't be done and, while it is



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true that the average housewife considers \$10 a week the adequate budget for four, Mrs. Griffin was able to demonstrate that it could be done on \$7.

It was interesting to notice that the greatest number of protests came from women in income brackets above that of Mrs. Griffin, and that a great many of them in their letters mentioned that their husbands had taxed them with not being as skilful managers as Mrs. Griffin was—and they should be. That seemed to hurt. The truth of the matter is that when people have to they can be very ingenious in spending their money, and that those who don't have to won't bother to count their pennies or walk that extra block to take advantage of a sale or take all the other short cuts that add up to big savings, no matter how loudly they protest and imagine they do.

Speaking of money, I must interject at this point that, while the spending of it is the subject of the most intense interest and controversy, money was not the motivating factor in gaining the consent of the families chosen to be featured in *How America Lives*. Without a single exception the most potent appeal came through an eloquent paragraph written by J. C. Furnas introducing the series:

'If democracy exists and works, if it is worth the conscious effort we are all making to preserve it, if it is not just a mask of words wearing thin over the same violence, poverty and spiritually bankrupt hatreds that are wrecking Europe, America is the place to see the difference proving something. Everybody knows his own neighbourhood pretty well, his own state and region better than people from other states and regions. That is not enough. Some of us are more, some less prosperous. Life in Southern California is quite a different story from life in upstate New York. Each of us ought to know all his 130,000,000 neighbours in our American democracy.'

When we started this series war rumbled in the distance.

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While it has been in progress war has come, and increasingly it is changing the conditions of life everywhere. It is a grim thought that this book may some day be classified as 'a revealing document of life before the war'. We sincerely hope not. But we are and have been aware of the danger.

However, if I have distilled any one fact from this past year of intensive experience it is this: that the average people of the United States are good people; that they are almost surprisingly modest in their demands upon life; that what they have is precious to them; that what they want is far from unattainable; that what they hope to achieve they are willing to work for—they don't want or expect it to be given to them, they want to earn it.

MARY CARSON COOKMAN



## HOW AMERICA LIVES

**T**HIS is America. The America that is perhaps, as you hear on all sides, to be the last stronghold of democracy. Whether that is true or not, we now need more than ever to know what the American way of life is.

Come along—and you will know, as you never knew before, the validity of our simple but profound American way of life, manifested in the lives of flesh-and-blood men, women and children here and now. Young, old, rich, poor, these people are as real, warm, and American as pumpkin pie right out of the oven. They are—democracy.

We began actually working up this material for 'How America Lives' about the time that Europe officially recognized its hopelessness by entering formal war. During the week-end I spent with the Griffins in Cedar Rapids, Poland was well on the way to extinction. To-day only England and Russia, fighting a war of brilliant courage against puzzled victors, Sweden, grudgingly playing stooge for the Nazis, Switzerland, slowly suffocating among violently exhibitionistic tyrannies, remain to give even the illusion of a human transatlantic civilization. By the time this reaches readers the United States may well be at war.

For a long time now the issues of what our nation is all about have cut so deep and heated so many people's minds that these easygoing descriptions of where people normally live, what they normally pay for food, how they normally feel about their futures and methods of raising children's allowances, should have shifted absurdly

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far out of drawing. Only that is precisely what they have not done. To me they seem in better focus than ever. Every successive European disaster, shattering something in Europe that is far more recognizable to us than anything dictatorship uses as replacement, has strengthened the American impulse to preserve the best of what we have, to make the most of our often wasted resources in a grim effort to keep international bullying and lying away from Ginger Chase's baby, who was born free and without fear or favour. How to organize that protection is still undecided. But there is small argument about the objective.

And what is 'the best of what we have'? Well, it is Joe Crick's instinct for good-humoured family co-operation—Joe would make a most peculiar citizen of a totalitarian state. It is Stanley Case's pride in the way his old father adapted himself to a new trade at so late an age. It is the extraordinary mixture of ancestries that the series turned up, without even making any effort to emphasize American heterogeneity—Pennsylvania Dutch, Canadian, Scottish-Irish, Greek, Norwegian, Scottish, German, French, Irish, Danish, Swedish, Polish, all recently arrived stocks blending in speech and understanding with early American stocks, which in turn had been almost equally weird mixtures. Nobody could miss the point of how much Joe Crick and Bo McMillin are alike as Westerners, though Joe is Pennsylvania Dutch and Bo strictly Irish. It is the way economic ups and downs have utterly failed to affect Walt Kriebel's habit of calling everybody he knows in Seattle by the first name, just because it never occurred to him to do anything else.

Nobody knows whether the fight on our hands will be actual war, or a battle of resources and nerves. But we will keep our tails up the better for knowing that the fight is not *primarily* to keep the flag flying over the

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English bastion against dictatorship—or to discourage Japanese megalomania in our own back yard—or to preserve the Monroe Doctrine's magic rope of sand round South America. Those are means to the main end. The main end is to keep alive the principles—which dictators would call catchwords—which guarantee that, if you gave a beefsteak supper including Stanley Case, Tom Wilson, Lou Guthrie, Ted Chase, Jonas Blair, Hearclite George, and so forth, they would all get along as if they had known each other all their lives. And what's more, feel as if they had.

J. C. FURNAS







The  
**AULDEN GRIFFINS**  
*of Cedar Rapids, Iowa*

THE Griffins were picked by formula, if you want to put it so bluntly. They were to be neither rich nor poor, owning their own home and having to be pretty careful about dimes and quarters—an income of around \$2,000 a year represents six million American families to whom dimes often seem thicker than the United States mint would approve. They were to live in a small city, preferably in the Middle West. They would have to be in love and making sacrifices for their children. That formula came miraculously to life in the persons of Mr. and Mrs. Aulden Griffin of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and their two children, Jacquie and Benny. They were a formula clothed with the liveliest and heartiest of flesh and blood.

In her middle thirties Mrs. Griffin is quite as pretty a blue-eyed, dark-haired girl as when she was married thirteen years ago. Present fashions do even better for her slim figure than the low waistlines of 1926 in the family snapshot album. Mr. Griffin is greying a little, but a slight tendency to lose his own waistline is the only other sign of his nearing forty. Walking to work down Cedar Rapids' long brick-paved avenues is taking care of that. His ready grin, with grey eyes lighting up shrewdly, has started no wrinkles round mouth or eyes. The only sport he goes in for—aquaplaning behind a motorboat on the long full stretch of river behind the power company's dam—is characteristically brisk.

For lack of a maid, Mrs. Griffin does all the household's cooking, washing, ironing and cleaning and, in addition

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to her responsibilities as the youngest president the Cedar Rapids Woman's Club has ever had, finds time to direct amateur dramatics for schools and churches, read to her children, chaperon Y.W.C.A. dances, shop thriftily, attend movies, concerts and civic meetings, and keep very close to her husband. She says she rather likes ironing at night when things pile up; it's quieter and cooler, and Aulden sits by the ironing board and they have a good gossip. Every moment is full, but the Griffins like life to be full.

Because he loves tinkering as a small boy loves tar to chew, Mr. Griffin seldom lets the family Dodge sedan see the inside of a garage. (This taste of his working with his hands, like his wife's ability to manage the house in stride, is economical, of course, as well as fun.) When they built their house, a garage of their own was out of sight financially. Later when they could afford only the lumber, Mr. Griffin designed and built a two-car job himself, carefully giving its roof the same cocky gable end to match the house. His wife, comfortable and attractive in shorts and sweater, helped nail on the roofing, driving her nails as straight as anybody. Now they are building a concrete driveway in chunks, as money for cement becomes available. Even the garage and the water hyacinths in the garden pool get a share of the affection that buoys up all relations among the four Griffins. There is something happily companionable about things you do and tend yourself.

Yet Mr. Griffin is hardly pottering round the place for lack of something to do. A good businessman of thirty-eight, he works hard, long and keenly in the credit end of the Cedar Rapids Engineering Company, a firm dealing in machine tools for car repairs. A sense of the value of time and effort tempers both his and his wife's liking for doing things themselves. They once tried vegetable



Sunday morning and the four Griffins homeward bound from church. Jacquie and Benny go to Sunday School just as their parents did when they were young. Most women of America want their children to have religious training.



(Top) The Griffin house. They own their own home every penny paid by their own hard work. (Lower left) The Griffin dining-room before redecoration. This house cost \$7,500. (Lower right) Mrs. Griffin's kitchen. Planned thirteen years.

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gardening on a vacant site in the city's outskirts because their home plot is too stony to raise anything much. Dry spells would see Mr. Griffin driving out there with a washtubful of water in the back seat. Since he does things well, it was a very successful garden. But he decided, when the last pumpkin was pulled, the game was not worth the candle. So no more garden truck has been raised. Since preserves and clothes come good and inexpensive at Cedar Rapids stores, Mrs. Griffin skips both canning and dressmaking. If she figured either worth while, however, she would find the time and energy—without grim-lipped driving, either—to do it well.

Husband and wife agree that his lack of wrinkles and the jaunty set of her shoulders are due to not worrying. The raw materials of worry might be there, if they wanted to look. Two children as hostages to fortune. When the depression shot a bigger and better paying job out from under Mr. Griffin, keeping a maid and giving their annual big party both became thoroughly inadvisable. But they own their own home, and future emergencies that may arise are prepared for with life insurance, the premiums on which bite a big hole in that annual \$1,960.

Beyond that, Mr. Griffin figures, things will always work out as long as he is alive and fighting. Just as, in aquaplaning, it never occurs to him that he might fall off the leaping board.

'I don't do much formal figuring,' he says. 'Now taxes are due pretty soon. Well, I'll think about it a couple of times this evening and then again in four or five days and it will get scraped together just about in time.'

The washing machine, the car and the radio were all bought for cash after steady saving with purchase in view. Decisions to buy new equipment, like all major household problems, get brought up before what Mr. Griffin calls the board of directors. A student of politics

would call it the family town meeting, with Jacquie, ten, and Benny, who is seven, debating and voting on a footing equal with their parents. A majority carries. A 2-2 tie calls for more argument until somebody changes his mind, for this is democracy pure and simple. The children sometimes vote against each other, sometimes against their parents, with arguments that, the parents agree, are shrewdly pithy and pointed.

When Mrs. Griffin was thinking of running for the Woman's Club presidency; when the old Ford and the ageing Studebaker were traded in with \$300 cash for the secondhand 1937 Dodge; when the buying of supplies was transferred from one store to another, the board of directors passed on the scheme each time. There is no 'father knows best' about this family circle. The Griffins think that, now the children are old enough to make sense, they ought to have a voice in what goes on in their own home. No new-fangled theory about it—just a part of their insistence on flexible good manners between parents and offspring.

Jacquie and Benny display their normal quota of devilment, but it is not met with nagging and bitter family scenes. Along with voting privileges, the children began to get regular allowances—a quarter apiece every two weeks—not as money dropping from heaven, but *on father's payday*, to keep them aware that money takes earning.

On week-end nights Jacquie washes the dishes—very well, too; and Benny, whose head comes well over the edge of the sink by now, wipes them. If mother is not yet back when they get home from school, they rally round to answer the telephone, which rings often and querulously for the president of the Woman's Club, until an adult arrives to take over. So far, numbers and messages, although a trifle wavering and smudgy, have always been accurately written down.

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Perhaps savvy and self-reliance come naturally to Jacquie and Benny because their parents have honoured so many of the self-reliant American traditions: that their folks were farmers two or three generations back. That there is honour as well as economy in doing things yourself. That self-support in college is a sound scheme. Mr. Griffin's father was a Cedar Rapids dentist, but his forebears—Scottish, with a dash of Pennsylvania Dutch—came west by way of farms in Ohio and Iowa. Mrs. Griffin's father sold furniture in Marshalltown, Iowa, but back of him were Missouri farmers, with a big dash of French for the variety characteristic of American family trees. Through his one year at Coe College, in Cedar Rapids, and the following three at the University of Iowa, Aulden worked summers to pay his own way. He preferred that to working while at college, because the one time he tried waiting at tables he broke his nerve and lost the job by spilling soup over a singularly unpleasant lady customer.

Waiting at tables at Coe to earn her board, Mrs. Griffin spilled no soup. After classes she worked for a local photographer—developing plates, assisting in posing the customers, often shooting pictures as well. Studying took place at night. College dramatics filled in chinks and gave her a knowledge of stagecraft that still brings in neat coaching fees to help clothe herself and the youngsters. To round out the picture of the typical bright young American girl, she taught school for three years after college, back home in Marshalltown. Naturally there were plenty of young men indicating great interest in her large blue eyes while Aulden was either away at the university or working hard in Cedar Rapids to save for their marriage. But the genial, shyish youngster she had first met in their freshman year at Coe remained her choice.

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As Mr. Griffin has his battered tool kit and yearns for a real woodworking shop, so his wife has her collection of old-time clothes and yearns for more attic room to store them. Accumulated costumes for fancy-dress and stage occasions progressed into a fascinating conglomeration of gay-nineties picture hats, the bustled and fringed gown that grandma had her picture taken in, high-button ladies' boots in pumpkin yellow, 1922 cloche hats and long-waisted frocks, checkered vests, silk toppers—whenever anybody in town cleans out an attic the cream of the lot is likely to find its way to Mrs. Aulden Griffin. She has also just supervised redoing the old yellow-brick mansion, once heavy with dark-brown varnish and full-length shutters, that the Woman's Club owns. Her masterpiece was the transforming of its dismal Victorian bathroom into a feminine dressing room in lavender and white. In recognition of the room's dashing quality, it is the only place in the clubhouse where members may smoke. Mrs. Griffin doesn't smoke herself, however, solely because she never learned to like the taste.

As a family the Griffins collect animals and all take a hand in looking after them. The family zoo may not strictly include the three cats. But the goldfish, the baby alligator, the white rats, the guinea pigs, the parakeet in the living room, and the big rhesus monkey that otherwise populate the place combine into something pretty sizable. Animals gravitate to the Griffins because they like them. The baby alligator was shipped alive in a cigar box as a joke to a Cedar Rapids businessman, who hurriedly passed the creature on to Griffin. The monkey came to Cedar Rapids with a New Jersey family who found her growing beyond anything they were prepared for. Since they got her about the time Edward VIII was abdicating, she was named Duchess—shortened to Duchie. The large piebald tom who heads the current



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tribe of Griffin cats is called Hitler because of his smeary black moustache. There are always more kittens arriving. And the whole family is looking forward to seeing what colour schemes will come out of putting a new white guinea pig among the present black and brown selection.

In spite of their naming pets after Wallis Warfield and Hitler, the Griffins' interest in world news is hardly feverish. When the war broke out they kept their radio red-hot, like everyone else. But by now only the late bulletins from WHO, in Des Moines, get much attention. Cedar Rapids as a whole, Mr. Griffin says, has about decided to let the war take care of itself and go back to Charlie McCarthy and market reports.

They both vote in national and local elections—Republican as a rule, although they split tickets when it suits them. Mrs. Griffin says she would cheerfully vote against her husband if she felt like it, but so far they have always agreed. Both have a keen proprietary pride in Cedar Rapids: its new civic centre on an island in the middle of the river; its mammoth Quaker Oats plant, the town's largest business; the *Gazette*, its top-notch newspaper, which got a recent Pulitzer prize for outstanding public service. With equal pride they drive people around to see the excellent country club that they can't afford to belong to and the huge old red-brick mansion set in acres and acres of grounds around the corner from their own house. It's all part of the picture, and envy apparently never occurs to them.

Proud as he is of the civic spirit that gives Cedar Rapids a municipal symphony orchestra with free classical concerts every week in season, Mr. Griffin seldom attends them. His personal idea of music, he confesses, is 'My Blue Heaven' or 'Alexander's Ragtime Band.' He is a little wistful about his blind spot, for his mother, who died when he was very small, was a fine pianist. He even had

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musical ambitions once himself—sent to Montgomery Ward for a \$60 silver cornet, and had a stab at it. That is the same cornet which, after twenty years of silence, Jacquie now plays with solemn skill and emphasis. Her father says she has her eye on a French horn belonging to her grandfather, who organized the Cedar Rapids Shriners' Band long ago. And Jacquie goes to concerts with her mother.

Getting her to practice the cornet is a chore, of course, but Mrs. Griffin takes that with the same philosophy she applies to the problem of school homework—just something children have to be jockeyed into. Under the table on the sun porch reposes an accordion that Mrs. Griffin once bought and never learned to play. There is hope in the household that young Benny, who is so musical that he sings like a tuneful little radiator all day long, will do right by that accordion in due time.

Mr. Griffin isn't much of a moviegoer either—he'd always a little rather be doing something around the place. So again Mrs. Griffin and Jacquie are the enthusiasts. Alice Faye used to be Jacquie's favourite actress, but Irene Dunne has recently replaced her. She and her mother are both very keen on Charles Boyer, whom Jacquie sees when his pictures are not too far on what her mother calls the sophisticated side. There is no mistaking the fact that, for all their difference in age, this mother and daughter are the best of friends.

As the social member of the family, Mrs. Griffin plays bridge now and again. But Mr. Griffin, although not averse to a friendly game where nobody worries about the score, says card-players who are out for blood get on his nerves. They all like homey games like Chinese chequers and jackstraws. And both husband and wife greatly enjoy the Congenial Hundred, their weekly dancing club. Nothing formal—the ladies wear long dresses, but even at the Christmas dinner dance the men stick to

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business suits. Lots of waltzes mingle with the fox trots these days, but the younger members' tendency to jitter-bugging is not indulgently regarded. 'It isn't pretty,' Mrs. Griffinsays. Yet the club's memberships are eagerly sought and the waiting list is always long and slow-moving.

It was a pity they had to give up their annual party at home. But money goes a lot further for social relaxation in the \$12-a-year membership in the dancing club. That kind of realism saves the Griffins many dollars for feeding animals and keeping up the insurance and other peculiarly important things. Mrs. Griffin drives her husband home for lunch every day, so that he saves cash and has a good meal too. Since he gets only one week's paid vacation a year, they always take a leisurely motor trip, eschewing the temptation to spend too much time and money at a lake resort. They point out thankfully that the modern public school gives children such things as free dental inspections and free music lessons that they would have to pay for otherwise. They do get a break on doctors' bills. None of them is ever sick. But that again is partly due to the shrewdness with which Mrs. Griffin keeps her whole family bursting with health on that dollar a day for food, exclusive of milk.

The little house with the cocky gable is warmly lived in. Dearie, the mother cat of the moment, is stubbornly transporting her latest litter in from the garage, one by one, in defiance of the ruling that the garage is where they belong. Mrs. Griffin, with the weekly grocery order half made out in her hand, is talking over the telephone to somebody laying a new civic project before the Woman's Club president. Jacquie is baking brownies—a delicacy she turns out on any or no pretext with a skill that should make some young man blissful later on. Benny, tuneful and absorbed, is choosing a banana for Duchie—interestedly

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aware all the while that, although Duchie eats bananas willingly, she is already good Iowan enough to prefer old-fashioned horse corn. This is an American family—neither old-fashioned nor new—with a roof over their heads and jobs to do and rich relationships among themselves.

### *The GRIFFINS' Budget*

There is no actual written budget. Mr. Griffin carries 'an approximate mental budget so that cash may be available for larger items—insurance premiums, taxes, and contingencies, when due, or needed'. Here is the cost of certain major items in 1939:

<i>Food</i> (groceries, \$375; milk, \$50)	\$425·00
<i>Clothing</i> (Aulden, \$45; Irene, \$55; Jacquie, \$35; Benny, \$25)	160·00
<i>Furniture</i> (upkeep; draperies, slip covers, etc.)	35·00
<i>Taxes</i>	147·00
<i>Fuel and Light</i> (fuel, \$110; light, \$50)	160·00
<i>Miscellaneous</i> (insurance, \$175; transportation, \$250, consists of gas and oil at \$90, 'other' at \$10, car depreciation and tyres at \$150)	425·00
<i>No Household help</i>	
<i>Maintenance of Health</i> (Benny's glasses, \$15; doctor and medical supplies, \$20)	35·00
<i>Recreation</i>	50·00
<i>Church, community chest, etc.</i>	18·00
<i>Telephone</i>	30·00
<i>Newspapers, magazines</i>	15·00
<i>Assistance to relatives</i> (old aunt and Dad)	360·00

*The*  
**THEODORE CHASES, JR.**

*of Schenectady, New York*

**A**LTHOUGH he doesn't know it yet himself, Theodore Woolsey Chase III will be born early next summer in Schenectady, New York. A Theodora Woolsey Chase would be equally welcome. It won't matter whether she combines her lean, terrier-built father's blue eyes with her tall, pretty mother's soft fair hair or her mother's brown eyes with her father's dark hair. What does matter is that this country of ours renews itself generation after generation. The democratic family keeps on happening because American girls are trim and shapely and laughing-eyed and possess the cordial instinct for comradeship that makes good wives.

America's young men are peculiarly susceptible to such qualities on spring evenings when the breeze eddies blandly round the windshield. Five years ago young Virginia Lee Day said all right to a chance date with the room-mate of a boy she knew at Philadelphia's Drexel Institute of Technology. The date consisted of a foursome drive through the National Cemetery at Arlington, Virginia, where Ginger's family live across the river from Washington. After they dropped the girls, Ted Chase told his room-mate firmly that there, by George, was just the kind of girl he wanted to marry.

Although Ginger was only sixteen at the time here was a determined young man with definite ideas. He had decided, for instance, that it would be highly improper to marry before he had \$5,000 in cash, \$5,000 in insurance, and a house. But that was before he met Ginger. He

had also figured precisely the sort of all-round girl the project called for—and here she was, way ahead of schedule. He certainly had no intention of mentioning the matter while he was still in college. But by 1937 the unbusinesslike atmosphere of a frat dance and some gentle assistance by Ginger brought out the fact that, whatever else happened, these two were going to be married. And last June, five years after that first meeting, there were three hundred engraved invitations and proper arrangements with the Mt. Vernon Place Methodist Church in Washington.

Because Ted liked her in orchid, Ginger's orchid marquisette wedding gown defied convention. But everything else was breathlessly standard—Ginger's sisters among the bridesmaids, Ted's ushers in ice-cream suits, the abrupt high squeal of the Mendelssohn march the moment the bride was kissed, the photographer whipping the wedding party into line on the lawn of Ginger's house, Just Married signs and old shoes on the new Chevrolet that a friend lent them for their wedding trip into New England. Ted had saved enough to pay for the wedding ring and a bang-up honeymoon with \$150 left over. And they had \$350 in wedding-present cheques. And Ted had a job. But the important fact was that he had Ginger.

Now the birth of a child is to make clear the long-range meaning of it all. This is how families happen, how children come to enlist in democracy as practised hereabouts.

These few pounds of red, raw recruit for a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal will be doing all right by himself. Not that he runs much risk of choking on silver spoons. His father, appearing on the payroll as Theodore Woolsey Chase Jr., draws precisely \$33.32 a



Ted and Virginia Chase, of Schenectady, N.Y. They've been married only a year or so, but things are off to a grand start.



When Ted's not on the job at the General Electric plant, the Chases do things together, even the marketing and the onion-peeling. They both enjoy evenings at home.





Recreation is equally mutual, and in fair weather Mr. and Mrs. Chase enjoy nothing better than a good game of tennis. In the evenings they sometimes give a dinner-party.



Another hobby that both Chases take pleasure in is hiking and camping jaunts. They think these well worth the trouble of carrying the large packs.



From the Chases' window it's a swell world! Rent \$37 per month, but some day of course they're going to build their own house. They have it all planned already.

Ted Chase believes in thrift. He and Ginger live on \$25 a week and bank the rest of his \$33.32 pay cheque against insurance and a school loan.



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a week as a cub commercial engineer for International General Electric Corporation. But this Ted Chase, born and reared in the genial austerity of Vermont, keen on his job and his outfit, endowed with a wiry stride, great self-possession and an enterprising glint in the eye, is pretty sure to have a future.

Ginger certainly thinks so. For five years she has been steadily more and more impressed with Ted. That first evening, she says, she was entranced by the lively sparkle in his eyes, but scared to death by his brains. Later she got better acquainted with the flicker of fun in his abrupt grin. Now, with the baby on the way, her faith in her husband makes her cheerily confident of the future:

'I'll feel a lot safer with a bright fellow like Ted looking after us than if I'd married a dumb millionaire with a lot of bonds. You can't tell what will happen to investments. But with Ted's brains and hard work to count on, we're going to do all right.' For the baby's sake she is pretty proud of the Chase coat of arms which hangs on the living-room wall of their furnished apartment. She points out with relish that, whereas her family were just plain common ordinary folks off Maryland and Virginia farms, Ted's ancestors include such names as Daniel Webster, General Winfield Scott, Longfellow, Louisa Alcott, and Theodore Woolsey, president of Yale, after whom Ted and his father were named.

Ted doesn't take much time to dwell on the advantages of fine forebears. He is carving out an individual career and has been entirely on his own for some years back. The flood that completely destroyed his father's fibre-processing mill in 1936 may have something to do with the earnest determination he shows in tackling the future and the notion he once had of earning a handsome net sum before thinking of marriage.

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He is still a little surprised—and delighted—at the cheerful poise with which Ginger faces financial tight spots. When he was working on one of his premarriage jobs in Washington, she had a hard time persuading him that she would rather take a penniless walk with him than go dancing with somebody who had money to spend. She still grins affectionately over the way he used to turn up with his fingers bound in gauze and adhesive—ostensibly because he was always nicking and scraping his hands while scrambling down manholes for the Potomac Electric Power Company. Only after marriage did she find out that those bandages were actually embarrassed camouflage for the fact that he couldn't get his nails clean of the muck and grease that manholes specialize in.

The way she loves him for such behaviour has none of the maternal attitude that so often slightly flavours an otherwise genuine love match with condescension: her maternal instincts will all be saved for Theodore/Theodora—where they best belong. Nor is the admiration in this family all on one side. Ted knows that the character he's tied to is something pretty special. When he feels the need of some more particular term than 'Ginger', he's apt to call her 'Sunshine'—and mean it.

A young marriage. Ted is only twenty-four, Ginger a mere twenty-one, her voice soft as spoon-bread, her figure long-legged, small-waisted, prettily moulded. Although it may be none of Theodore III's business, Ginger and Ted had not planned starting a family so soon. Not that they didn't want to be 'tied down.' As Ginger points out, they didn't marry on short acquaintance, and they've had plenty of good times together already. But the marriage is less than a year old, and they are still two separate young personalities learning to merge into a household. They felt they had plenty

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of time and, with his Yankee sense of financial responsibility, Ted figured on waiting till he was getting \$40 a week before thinking about offspring. By the time successive rises had reached that far, he might well have paid back all the money he borrowed toward part of his college expenses, now being worked off at a few dollars a week.

Faced with a family in the making, however, this pair of youngsters in love gamely changed their minds. People who want rich and full lives have to start living them early, Ted says. Fine to have children while you're young enough to have fun with them, Ginger says. As she warms up to this subject, her Virginia drawl warms up too, rubbing more corners off more words every sentence. After all, they've changed their plans before this under persuasion of the more imperative life forces. People ought to take chances, Ted says now, recalling the shocking fact that they had only about \$500 in the world when the words 'man and wife' were pronounced.

Both are convinced that that compromise with human instincts worked out swell. They got ready for marriage in much the same blithe spirit in which they now prepare for their week-end camping trips. Since young Mr. and Mrs. Chase would need a car of their own, Ted bargained a fellow down to \$65 on a 1930 Ford coupé, then wired Ginger down in Arlington that he had only half of it and could she raise the other half? Neither Ginger nor her family had too much money lying around. But her father, who runs a pharmacy in Herndon, Virginia, and a small farm on the side, was ready to sympathize wholeheartedly with any project that promised to make his daughter happy. Ginger showed him the wire and came back with two \$20 bills.

The car isn't strictly an old crock, though it definitely shows signs of wear. Obviously the factory-fresh Chevvy

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they borrowed for their wedding trip made a better setting for the well-turned-out bride. But the Chase car doesn't really deserve its pet name—Halitosis. Ted called it that because he suspected for quite a while that it would prove to have something dreadfully wrong with it. The suspicion was unjust. Halitosis whirls them round Schenectady's sobersided streets with a vivacity that keeps them on the broad grin. Ted cheers and Ginger whoops as he punches the horn, jams the accelerator to the floor, and swirls past some shiny new car with Halitosis gamely reaching for the fifty-five she can occasionally do with a little downgrade to help. 'A pretty snazzy little buggy,' Ginger says pridefully.

Kid though she is, she will make a swell mother, able to cope cheerfully with both diet and devilment. Back home she used to work in summer supervising public playgrounds, and came out of that with her fondness for children not only undamaged but significantly increased. There was, for instance, a ragged youngster who was stealing softballs and bats and such equipment from the playground. Ginger cannily appointed him—still undetected as far as he knew—to be official equipment guardian. First the stolen items mysteriously reappeared. Then presently she had the satisfaction of seeing her zealous new policeman run down and lick to a frazzle a much bigger boy who was walking off with a football under his coat.

She will have plenty of scope for such talent in child psychology. Ted and she agree they want three children—just the number, as it happens, that experts recommend if this country is to maintain a healthy population level. The Chases arrived at that total by dead reckoning—one child, they believe, is likely to be spoiled, two may tempt parents to show partiality, three is just enough of a crowd for flexibility.

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General Electric's Schenectady plant is, among other things, the main proving ground and training school for its 'testmen'—college graduates selected annually out of the year's crop. So the town is full of bright kids retaining much collegiate flavour. Groups of them band together in boarding clubs unofficially called the Rut or the Monastery or Wimpy's Inn which fill vacancies strictly by invitation and throw parties carrying the fraternity house motif still further. Badminton, bowls, basketball and the like flourish in this environment. These lads and their girls and wives are Ted and Ginger's colleagues in dancing, picnicking, bridge playing and using the Edison Club, the country club that the company maintains for employees. For camping, climbing or skiing, the Adirondacks lie close against Schenectady to the north and Vermont is not far to the east. Skiing is one sport that never came up in Ginger's background, but Ted's so keen on it that she's willing to try. Such an atmosphere involves little risk that Theodore III's parents will get old before their time.

After the 'test period', General Electric recruits go off to the company wars in definite jobs. Last July Ted graduated into his present berth as commercial engineer—technical liaison adviser between company engineers and foreign sales force. Eventually that may mean foreign jobs, making him a member of those little knots of young Americans who handle local business for American banks, oil companies, motor manufacturers and so forth all over the world. In case that means South America, Ted and Ginger have been studying Spanish—Ginger harking back to her high-school course at Washington-Lee. But only Ted is likely ever to use it. His foreign work may involve something pretty primitive in the way of mountains or swamps. Maybe not, but there is little hope that he will land in the kind of foreign parts where

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an American baby would find things up to standard—and this family is planned to include at last one member of pretty tender age for some years to come. Four months' leave every three years is a chilly enough prospect for a young father. But the prospective grandmother who prophesied that the first baby would scupper the whole idea of foreign jobs was thoroughly wrong.

For the Chases are looking that one straight in the eye. 'It's Ted's job,' Ginger says. 'What kind of wife would I be if I didn't let him go? I'll have the children'—always that confident plural—'and enough to live on. Ted's been working for that kind of job for ten years and getting married and being a father isn't going to stand in his way. Not if I can help it.' Ted nods agreement somewhat grimly. Foreign service doesn't last for ever. After eight or nine years, back you come for good to build a home and raise a family in the right way.

He sees it as just one more way to attain his ends. He's been doing that right along. Although all his family were Dartmouth men, he went to Drexel because he wanted technical work and because Drexel is one of those co-operative schools where the student earns part of his own way at real jobs in the intervals of study. That suited Ted all round. For one thing, he's not the cloistered academic type. His idea of real fun is working with his hands, and right now his pet daydream is a workshop of his own and time to use it. But the main advantage Drexel offered was a chance to get going on his career.

Beginning with his freshman year, he consciously went in for all the extracurricular activities he could manage as training for contacts with people and management—president of his fraternity, advertising and business manager for college publications, class offices, and membership in no less than four national honorary fraternities. As a conspicuous member of the college



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ROTC he went through to a second lieutenant's commission in the reserve. The War Department recently sent him a paper, which he signed immediately, agreeing to be ready for six months' active service on short notice. If there's war, he says, he hopes to get right into action because that will mean a captain's commission right off—and hence more money for wife and child.

The way he makes up his mind in words of one syllable reminds you that the school he went to in St. Johnsbury, Vermont, had Calvin Coolidge for most eminent pupil. The relative who lent him that money for college once said that, since Ted was obviously turning out well, he could forget about paying it back. Ted couldn't feel right about that. Payments are going steadily on out of what remains after rent, food, clothes, and life insurance come out. When saving money to marry on he enlisted in General Electric's volunteer fire department for nine months, sleeping in the firehouse every night when alarms permitted, along with other thrifty lads who also wanted to save room rent and earn a \$30 bonus to boot.

Ginger also has reason to know where money comes from. She cheerfully admits that her parents spoiled her, with considerable help from generous aunts, uncles, and grandparents. But she knows that they made sacrifices for her, and is ready to do the same for her own children. Besides those playground jobs, she once put in nine months of standing and yes-madamming in a Washington department store. After you've worked yourself, she says, you hate to ask financial favours of anyone.

Formal education took Ginger through a year of physical culture course at George Washington University and another year at a business college. Someday she would like more college work in such varied interests as psychology, clothes designing, art appreciation. But she

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adds up to a versatile young woman already. She rides well and loves it and will talk on and on about the little mare, half polo pony, half Western pinto, which is waiting for her down on her father's farm. And for a while there Ginger was doing well enough with dancing—tap, interpretive, ballroom, everything but classical ballet—to have some hopes of following in the nimble footsteps of her Hollywood namesake. But she was never quite stagestruck enough for her common sense to permit her to pull up stakes and start the long battle she knew professional dancing would be. If it's ever feasible again, she would like to go on dancing just for fun. But the only time she tried a few taps in the Schenectady apartment, the tenant downstairs asked the landlady please to send her a clothesbasket to put under the chandelier—just in case.

Her hands know enough about tools to have once helped her father build a boat. Her grandfather was a cabinetmaker and if Ted ever gets that workshop, Ginger will be at the very least an interested observer. She can tell in as much forceful detail as a man just what is wrong with the way their apartment was handled when the house was remodelled. An elderly wooden house, on a street of elderly wooden houses, made over into apartments and naturally showing such queer touches as a skylighted bathroom behind the kitchen and a window looking senselessly out of the living room into a glassed-in porch.

But newlyweds are affectionately indulgent to their first home and the porch is full of daylight to eat breakfast by and the kitchen is great fun. Ted is always clipping recipes out of magazines and newspapers for Ginger to try out and sportingly helps wash pots and pans after the experiment. Household chores in general get the better of Ginger on occasion. Not that she isn't in there trying

## THE THEODORE CHASES, JUNIOR

with might and main. But this is no streamlined modern home, and equipment is cautiously budgeted, one saucepan or paring knife at a time, with no immediate hope of more impressive gadgets.

Ted's cheerful co-operation takes care of any bad jams in the system—in a pinch he can even help with the ironing. The more creative jobs go better. Even before marriage Ginger, reared in a house that took cooking seriously, had a sound grasp of piecrust and could turn out a first-class hot biscuit. She and Ted still squabble over biscuits—as a New Englander, he wants them light and huge, she wants them so short they almost crumble apart and somewhere between a quarter and a half-dollar in size. But Ted allows she is developing into a real cook, as anybody who can bake a good biscuit is pretty certain to.

Halitosis and all, the Chases live on \$25 a week, with the balance going to insurance and debt. Rent is \$37 a month. Every week Ted takes \$3 for incidentals and tries to save a dollar of it. Ginger gets \$10 for food and incidentals, including some laundry she can't manage in the apartment with no machine, and tries to save a dollar too. Sometimes she succeeds. Sometimes he does. At \$4 or \$5 a month for petrol and garaging in a rickety lean-to down the street, Halitosis is hardly an extravagance. Neither are weekly movies, for the Chases sit high and cheap in the big movie theatres downtown.

They like their movies good quality. *Juarez*, *Pygmalion*, *Dark Victory* were favourites. Ginger is still glowing from her enjoyment of her birthday present last summer—season tickets for the Mohawk Drama Festival which annually presents a series of good plays with famous stars at Schenectady's Union College. But neither Ted nor Ginger could be called highbrow. Jack Benny and Fibber McGee are Ted's favourite radio programmes.

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

And Ginger is so fond of Dorothy Dix's newspaper column that she often reads it aloud to Ted, who admits it packs in a lot of interest.

They are fully—and cheerfully—aware that, beginning next summer, their new camping equipment will have to stay unused week-end after week-end, projects like learning to ski will be shelved, and many a movie admission will go for strained vegetables and milk. But after all, says Ginger, they've had months of first-class fun—now it's time to get down to serious business.

*The*  
**L. A. GUTHRIES**  
*of Dallas, Texas*

LAST autumn a seventeen-year-old girl from Texas, with a peaches-and-cream complexion, wide blue eyes, and a long honeycoloured bob came up North to the Edgewood Park School in Briarcliff Manor, New York. She is getting along fine with the school and the Yankee girls in it and the Yankee boys from near-by West Point who swarm the campus every week-end. But for all that she is still homesick for Dallas. She says she has the nicest home and the most wonderful family in the world and if her father hadn't thought it would be good for her to get away and learn to run her own life, she would still be there, luxuriating in her home's niceness and her family's wonderfulness.

Every mellifluous word makes it clearer what a wonderful thing it is to live in Dallas's Highland Park district along with understanding parents and a comradely kid brother and a good income. Given the right parents, a prosperous suburb of Kansas City or Cleveland or Seattle would doubtless present much the same picture. But it is for the white-brick house at 4536 North Versailles Avenue and Mr. and Mrs. L. A. Guthrie who live there that Virginia Guthrie is specifically and specially homesick.

When the surveyors first plotted it, this new suburb was rolling-pin flat and practically treeless. So naturally some real estate broker named it Highland Park. It has lots of young trees now, doing vigorously under careful tending, and the wide horizons are held in by flocks of new houses, so many of them built of the same white

brick that the whole neighbourhood has a consistent charm rather unusual in America. The warmly comfortable way of life they represent rests on the cushioning prosperity of Dallas itself, which, strategically situated as distributing centre for the big Texas oilfields, has been growing like a beanstalk. A gain of almost a hundred thousand population in the last decade and the likelihood that it will continue to move right on in wealth and numbers for years to come. Highland Park is just one of the spots it grows and prospers into.

Two-car garages at the back—father drives one car to office, mother and the children keep the other moving all day long. Golf clubs and prayer books, high-school annuals, poker chips and carefully preserved wedding dresses in various closets. Charge-account bills piled in dainty spinet desks the first of the month. Gas furnaces cleanly combating the mild Texas winter. A coloured boy in a white jacket answering the front door. Well-groomed shrubbery masking solid foundations. A few miles away is Dallas's central clump of skyscrapers, proudly called the finest skyline in the South, and the huge Coca-Cola plant which is the city's latest industrial acquisition. Over everything, brooding in apparent approval, is the wide, light Texas sky.

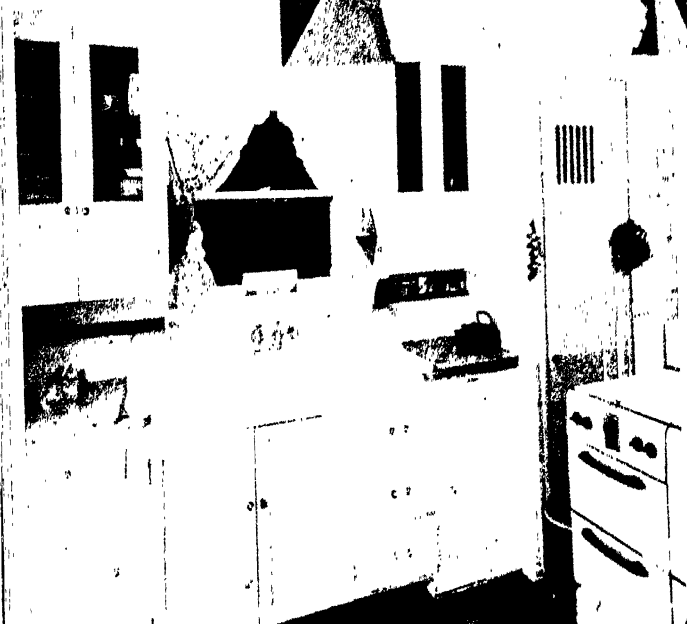
The Guthries' relatively modest house cost them rather over \$10,000 to build ten years ago. The mortgage was cleared up in six years because Lou Guthrie, a shrewd businessman as well as a genial paterfamilias, does very much all right heading the claims department of a big workmen's casualty insurance company. The garage houses a dashing cream-coloured 1939 Studebaker sedan for the family in general and a company-owned 1938 black Buick sedan of which Mr. Guthrie, as assistant secretary, has full use. Highland Park School, the 'silk-stocking' high school of the Dallas system—where young



The Guthries keep the front door of their white brick house in Dallas swinging constantly. Texas hospitality is proverbial, and Mrs. Guthrie comes from New Orleans, where entertaining is a fine art.



Mrs. Guthrie plans the daily menus with reference to the time - worn pages of her mother's treasured cook book. Her kitchen is famous for its Creole specialties.





## THE L. A. GUTHRIES

Louis, now a junior of fifteen, gets dropped off by his father each morning—is six or seven blocks away, down the new, clean, winding streets. Virginia graduated there before she went North and both the elder Guthries feel it offers opportunities for youngsters undreamed of in their own school days.

Inside the white brick walls, Mrs. Guthrie, born Sadie Unsworth of New Orleans, who had to come to Dallas to get her first glimpse of snow, presides serenely over old glass and good silver, the knobby quaintness of old black walnut and the grace of slender mahogany, the bright fluffy mats in the bathrooms and the clean white paint on the latticed front door. Virginia has every right to be pretty and charming. This mother of hers, head high and shoulders back as Miss Finney's finishing school trained her to carry herself, has a profile like a miniature marquise off a seventeenth-century snuffbox. It is extremely logical that Virginia's grandmother, whom she called Nannie and idolized, should have been a radiant New Orleans belle.

According to morbid-psychologists who believe that mother-daughter conflicts are dismally normal, Virginia has no right to think of her mother as her best and most congenial friend. She is just at the right age for sullen rebellion against parents and home environment and yearning to get away from it all. But Jinkie is derelict in her duty to morbid-psychology and doesn't seem to care.

'Mother and I gad around everywhere together,' she says blithely. 'I talk to her just like she was someone my own age. Once in a while she cocks an eyebrow but it's never serious. I just can't understand why everybody hasn't got the same kind of family life we have. We squabble—sure. My brother and I even throw things at each other once in a while. But there's a real congeniality underneath and we all love to be together.'

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

First-class testimony to the even temper and general unruffleability which ex-Captain Louis Guthrie, just back from serving with the occupational forces in Germany, spotted in the doctor's daughter he met on a chance date in New Orleans where he was working. When she was younger, Jinkie put that evenness of temper to some rather severe tests—she was given to dawdling, with a breezy indifference to clocks. On occasion an application of small switch to small daughter was necessary to clear the air. But the air always cleared, all the balmier for it.

Sadie Guthrie's own rearing had been archaically strict. Never a date of any kind till she was eighteen—a cloistering which made her so shy that for years after growing up she always crossed the street to avoid the nervous ordeal of having to pass the time of day with anybody she knew. Little trace of that shyness survives in her present poise. In rearing Jinkie, she completely reversed things—so successfully that her daughter's present cordial self-possession would do credit to an ambassador's daughter. Both Jinkie and Louis have been allowed to go out on dates ever since they were old enough to want to. No rules whatsoever about when they're to get home. Now one of the things Jinkie is most homesick for is the way her mother's voice sounded over the telephone when—without anybody's saying—~~she~~ she had to do it—wandering daughter rang up to say she would be later than expected.

Just as she is homesick for the peculiarly Creole bite and heat of the barbecue sauce that always ornamented occasions when the children's friends would be rallied round the barbecue pit that Mr. Guthrie designed for the backyard. Swarms of youngsters were always trooping in and out of the Guthries' white-latticed front door. More than just dropping in after school, although there was plenty of that too. But specially planned Sunday

## THE L. A. GUTHRIES

night suppers for the gang, special picnics at the Dallas Hunting and Fishing Club—not because the Guthries have solemn theories about their children's friends but because they like having giggly or gangly, pretty, comically polite young people underfoot.

It's all homesick-making. Recollections of the Guthries' unorthodox Sunday morning breakfast, always an utterly Creole kidney stew in wine. Of the fried chicken in the great classical tradition turned out in the Guthrie kitchen by a long, lean coloured chap named Curtis. Of the innumerable varieties of dessert incorporating the family's favourite chocolate flavour. Of Blumie, Curtis's slow but sure wife, who collaborates with him on the housework and has been complaining that, since Miss Verginger went away up there to school, the telephone has practically gone dead. Blumie is particularly on Virginia's mind because of her long pencilled letters:

'Dear Miss Verginia, . . . We are doing fine and hope you are likewise. Haven't seen any of your old Bo's, we sure can tell who was popular here. I think your leaving taken away everybody. A quiet house now. The phonograph don't get played but a little. Mr. Guthrie take the blues and play him a piece . . . I feel like I am working for different people I can't hear your voice it ~~is so~~ lonesome without you but if a millionaire fall in love with you we can do without you a little while longer . . . I wish you all the luck in the world in book affair, love affair and all other affair. . . . If a love-bug bite you be sure it's a good one . . . be a sweet young lady. Good-bye. Your Maid, Blumie Bramlett.'

In their own terms Curtis and Blumie do all right too. Working three days a week for the Guthries, three for neighbours of theirs, Curtis gets \$5 a week from each family. Blumie gets \$6 for full time with the Guthries. They have excellent living quarters, bedroom and bath,

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

in the large Guthrie garage and own a car—a second-hand Plymouth in fair shape. Mr. Guthrie, who considers Curtis a man to tie to, ‘went on his note’ to enable him to buy that car and Curtis makes gratifying regular payments out of his wages. As regularly and with the same sense of responsibility with which he vacuum-cleans the house.

Under the glass on Virginia’s desk at school is a snapshot of a broad-built, broad-faced, silver-haired, rosy-skinned man of forty-four. This is a man who ‘takes the blues’ because his daughter was seventeen hundred miles away in school, even though it was his own idea—looking as Scottish as his full name, Louis Alexander Guthrie, and as easygoing as the old hunting clothes he was wearing when the picture was snapped. Grandfather Guthrie was a Scots printer and newspaperman who married twice, had a total of ten sturdy children, and came over to Texas with his family just in time for Lou, last of the ten, to be born American. The old printer bought several small-town newspapers round about Boerne, just north of San Anton’. All the boys but Lou stayed in the family trade one way or another—a cousin in Kilmarnock still sends the Guthries the paper he publishes. With all his Caledonian background, Lou ought to have retained some burr in his speech. But he talks straight Texas-pungent and slow-syllabled, a little harsh only in comparison with the sliding r-less soprano his wife brought over from New Orleans.

It was only six months from the moment Texas encountered Louisiana on that chance date that they made a match of it. Lou, just turned twenty-five, was already making \$200 a month working for an insurance company. Immediately after his marriage he left that job and came to Dallas to join the outfit he is with now. Housing was scarce and high in Dallas at that time and the inexperienced

young couple got rooked at first for uncomfortable quarters. But by the time Jinkie was born fourteen months later things were going better and Lou's job has kept on increasing in remunerativeness and security ever since.

The household's prosperous comfort now rests on an income in the \$10,000-\$12,000 bracket derived from Guthrie's salary and in the dividends on the stocks he buys when a surplus is available. His life insurance comes to \$35,000, and when he reaches sixty-five his company pension will probably amount to \$350 a month.

Perhaps only a Scotsman would worry under such circumstances. But he can't make himself feel altogether sure that he is making the most of present opportunities to build security for his family, of whom he is so happily proud. Something is always coming up to bite into potential savings. Another room added as the children grow up. Doctors' bills. The \$1,500 a year it takes to cover Virginia's school. (The cash reserve accumulated against the children's schooling was never intended to be enough for the whole job.) He would like to exchange the family car every two years, but it is usually nearer four before the deal can be made. Although he admits that everybody who makes more than a bare living probably partakes of this anxiety, although he is completely surrounded by evidence that he is a remarkably good provider, he worries anyway. And he shoulders his worry alone—while he eventually 'discusses' important financial matters with his wife, he cheerfully admits that the discussion amounts to informing Sadie of a decision already made.

But he manages a good deal of relaxation. That snapshot on Jinkie's desk shows him with a shotgun, and his most prized possession is a telescopic-sight rifle that he cherishes like a violin. Every Texan is a confirmed hunter and the \$250 a year that hunting costs Louis

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

Guthrie one way and another seems eminently well spent on a misty morning in a duck hide, some hundreds of miles from home. Motoring distance means nothing in Texas. The Guthries are regarded locally as eccentric because they think four hundred miles a day at fifty-five or so is quite enough, with Mrs. Guthrie relieving her husband at the wheel. Everybody else they know cheerily drives at seventy-five to make six hundred miles a day when touring. Slow though they are, the Guthries' vacation—two to four weeks a year—is always a motor trip, sometimes combined with business. Down into Mexico last year, over to California the year before. Mr. Guthrie has itching feet, if the truth were told. Give him enough time and money, he says, and he'd start travelling and never stop till he dropped in his tracks.

In his days at West Texas Military Academy Lou played football and baseball. He kept on with the baseball in the company team until accumulating years retired him from the bases, and then, until recently, managed the team. Nowadays he gets his exercise manipulating the Guthrie's two-lot backyard, expressing his sense of order in beautifully regular planting and then worrying for fear he's made it all too stiff and formal. Every autumn Friday afternoon Mr. Guthrie goes, rain, shine or blow, to watch his son play a hard-hitting and conscientious game of football in the Highland Park team. Father leaves the yelling to the kids and chats a good deal with other parents who show up, but his bright blue eyes follow his boy expertly through the confusion of every play and he stiffens with pride when the announcing system booms out: 'Jake Smith thrown for a loss of three yards, Louis Guthrie making the tackle from behind the line.' After all, football is to Texas what bullfighting is to Spain.

The Guthries are still a little breathless about young

Louis's playing football, plus basketball in the school team in winter, because a couple of years ago his lungs had both family and doctors pretty worried. Louis still looks rather too slight and slender-necked for football when you see him in a sweater instead of the hulking pads of football armour. But, when he steps on the scales, he turns out to be 170 pounds of solid bone and muscle you could bend nails on. Every summer he spends doing as much of a man's work as fifteen-years-old can manage on a Texas ranch—no dude ranch either. His room is ornamented with athletic letters, Mexican quirts and spurs, and the bows and arrows he makes himself in the garage workshop that he and Curtis fitted up awhile back. Man-sized, heavy-pulling bows and grim-pointed, clean-feathered arrows which he yearns to try out in an actual game in the field if he can ever find a place where the experiment would be legal. Has he ever seen movies of that fellow in California shooting deer and puma with bow and arrow? 'Yes, sir,' he says, eyes lighting up over his comic grin, 'that's what put the notion in my head. That's what I'm practising out there for on that target in the backyard.'

All normal boy. By unwritten family law the comic strip page out of the morning paper is handed over to him the moment he appears at the breakfast table. Hot scraps between him and Jinkie were frequent, without ever making a dent in their mutual affection. But he is more conscientious about study than she ever was, making a consistently good showing. And, completely on his own, without the family having a thing to do with it, he has determined to enter the Episcopalian ministry. Every Sunday he serves as acolyte at the Church of the Christ, which the family attend. The Guthries approve without making a fuss either way. Their children always took church as a natural, voluntary part of life. Nobody

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

is trying to persuade him to go to any particular college either. Texas is running over with sizable universities—Southern Methodist, one of the more conspicuous, is right in Dallas—and he will probably take his own pick among these.

Jinkie is by no means sure what she wants to do. Her experiences at the Yankee school have gone far to develop in her that self-reliance her father was looking for. She is studying a course called Fashion and Merchandizing, which takes in dressmaking, fashion designing, that segment of the French language that creates the jargon of fashion with words like 'chic,' 'couturier,' and 'lingerie,' and frequent trips to New York to window-shop. Back in Dallas she went to an art school run by a well-known local artist named Otis Dozier and learned her way about among oils and pastels and charcoal. She might like to run a smart dress shop in Dallas. It must be Dallas—'New York's the most exciting place in the world, but I wouldn't live anywhere but Dallas.' Or go on with painting. Or—in view of how pretty a child she is, this seems likeliest—marry in Dallas and start another home as near like her own as she could manage, only with more children. 'Ah change my mind from day to day,' she says, with rueful self-realization, 'Ah'm just that age.'

Jinkie was the gadabout of the two young Guthries. She could use the car whenever she liked and it was available to tool over to a country club dance or chauffeur the gang to the movies. Louis has the same privilege and occasionally exercises it, perhaps for a Saturday night movie, but since he is practically always in training for some athletic team and very conscientious about it too, he does relatively little running around. Mr. and Mrs. Guthrie go to movies a fair amount, but Mrs. Guthrie has no special enthusiasms, except to agree with



her husband that *Good-bye, Mr. Chips* was the Guthrie pet for the last year. Lou has more pronounced tastes—he likes Wallace Beery's blundering bluffness and is so mad about W. C. Fields that he often sits twice through the latest Fields opus.

The Guthries' own social life is just as full as anybody would want. Highland Park is teeming with people they know. The year's climax is at Christmas when, after a strictly family Christmas Eve, everybody holds old-fashioned open house on Christmas Day. Egg-nog appears and so do all the neighbours, trooping from spot to spot, with tall glasses of bourbon and soda for the gentlemen who want to be merrier than egg-nog in potable quantities permits. The rest of the year the Guthries may go dancing at the Hotel Adolphus or the Baker, Dallas's plush and worldly hotels, along with another couple or two. Mrs. Guthrie is very keen on dancing and wishes, a little wistfully, that her husband felt altogether the same way. They play cards a good deal, with near and not so near neighbours. Poker is popular among Dallas ladies. Bridge blazes there as hotly as anywhere else, with another comment from Mrs. Guthrie: 'I only know two conventions in bridge and get along all right by sticking to them. Lou doesn't know any or want to know them and you have to be a mind reader to play in the same game with him.' He grins broadly and goes right on enjoying himself hugely, bidding and playing his hands entirely by ear.

They get in a fair amount of reading too. Mrs. Guthrie makes great use of the Book-of-the-Month Club, as the sunroom bookcases testify. She was being very struck with *All This, and Heaven Too* and *North-West Passage*, while her husband was being fascinated by *Not Peace but a Sword*. They read pretty much the same books, swapping impressions of them before the fireside of

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

an evening. The house is stiff with such magazines as *Time*, *Life*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, the *Reader's Digest*—for both of them; *Good Housekeeping*, the *Ladies' Home Journal*, and the home decorating, gardening, and antique collecting group for her. Neither of them is absorbingly interested in politics either worldwide or local. As Texans, they naturally vote Democratic—Mr. Guthrie says he would call himself a conservative, although no hidebound Tory. But he is not active in either local politics or local civic affairs, except to contribute some \$300 a year to the Community Chest and such good causes. Although Mrs. Guthrie belongs to the Woman's Democratic Luncheon Club, she is by no manner of means the most active member. Her outside interests are definitely inside her own household.

Before she left home Virginia used to go with her mother to lecture series, with visiting celebrities handling important subjects. Cornelius Vanderbilt and H. R. Knickerbocker made the greatest impression on them. Virginia also has strong opinions about all the stuff in books and magazines about the moral irresponsibility and social confusion of her generation of kids. People who write that kind of truck just don't know what they're talking about. She and her ilk will come out of their greensickness very much all right, just the way boys who come back from college blasé recover from it, if only their elders will stop fussing and trying to complicate things by rushing into print about them.

Evidently living at 4536 North Versailles Avenue gives you a lot of that sense of security that psychologists are always talking about.

## THE L. A. GUTHRIES

### *The GUTHRIES' Budget*

- Here are some of the major expenses that go to make up the Guthries' yearly living costs:

<i>Food</i>	\$1095·00
<i>Taxes on home</i>	165·00
<i>Fuel and light</i>	168·00
<i>Household help</i> (plus board and room)	572·00
<i>Hunting</i> (trips, club, dues, licence, etc.)	250·00
<i>Telephone</i>	48·00
<i>Newspapers, magazines</i>	50·00
<i>Contributions</i>	300·00
<i>Summer vacation trip</i> (Mexico)	400·00
<i>Virginia's school</i>	1500·00
<i>Virginia's allowance</i>	300·00
<i>Louis's allowance</i>	120·00

The Guthries do not keep a budget, and for this reason find expenses for clothing, furniture, recreation, and maintenance of health 'too scattered to figure'.



*The*  
**STANLEY A. CASES**  
*of Detroit, Michigan*

EVERY weekday morning round 7.15 a springy little fellow with curly hair and no hat gets hurriedly but enthusiastically kissed by a slender bright-faced young woman at the front door of 21241 Audette Avenue, Dearborn, Michigan. Then he tucks a lunchbox under his arm and walks briskly toward Dearborn's business centre. Shortly after five he reappears, the lunchbox empty, to be swarmed over by a pretty five-year-old daughter and a husky four-year-old son and enthusiastically yapped at by a fuzzy six-month-old puppy waiting to be slid around the kitchen linoleum.

Meantime the curly-headed young man has been working at the Cadillac plant in Detroit, helping General Motors turn out more shiny new Cadillacs. His own car is a seven-year-old Pontiac sedan and it will probably be a long time yet before he turns her in for a later model. A new suit that he bought last year was his first in five years. The little grey house he returns to is definitely too small for all five of them.

Nevertheless, badly as it needs new paint, the old Pontiac is still singing along pretty sweetly underneath. So are Mr. and Mrs. Stanley A. (for Absalom) Case, Beverly Jane Case and Dean Wellington Case. The fact that the American Kennel Club would disdain Skippy, who is part wire-hair and part Irish terrier, makes no difference to his fond owners. It's a pretty smart pup, they say, who at nine weeks had already learned to speak for his supper and fetch the tin dish, almost as big as he was, in which supper is served.

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

Both Edith and Stanley Case are artists at cutting coats according to cloth without undue repining. They are cheerfully planning on building themselves a much better house on borrowed money, so the quarter of their income that goes to rent will start becoming an asset instead of just vanishing. And when asked at what period in their married life she and Stanley most enjoyed themselves, really had a whale of a good time they would remember the rest of their lives, Edith Case thought a moment and then spoke up with sudden conviction:

'Right now! We pay our own way. Thank goodness, we've never had to use a cent of anybody else's money. We have two fine children. We're having a perfectly swell time right here and now!' Stanley nods agreement with the warmth and energy in her voice, and the confident smiles they exchange make it plain that fretting for the moon is no part of this family's daily routine. How do they manage? Edith describes that with the same pith: 'When Stan isn't working steady, we just eat and pay the rent. When work gets steady again, we buy things that have to be bought.'

The simplicity of that formula, of course, will fool no experienced housewife. As a tool inspector, half-way between the rank and file on the assembly lines and the crack craftsmen in the plant, Stanley makes an average of about \$1,600 yearly, which last year was almost the exact average yearly earning of all wage earners in automobile and parts factories (\$32.48 per week, according to the United States Bureau of Labour Statistics). Every Friday evening he hands his pay envelope right over to Edith, getting back only small change. They both know from long experience that it usually takes all the paper money in that envelope to feed, house, clothe, and insure the five of them.



Sundays and holidays Stanley Case works in the garden to keep the place looking nice. He prides himself on his accurate pruning.



Mrs. Case uses plenty of elbow grease on the kitchen floor. She relaxes at crochet-club meetings. Last year they made rugs; before that, quilts.



The old house was furnished more for comfort than for style, but the Cases are looking over plans for a new house.

They'll miss the peach trees, which gave Mrs. Case a quarter of the 200 jars of fruit she canned last summer.



The old home is pretty small, and the Case family has outgrown it. Their new house is going to cost about \$4,400 altogether.



## THE STANLEY A. CASES

Edith shuffles and deals those folded bills with dash and skill. Even with doing every bit of baking except bread on the premises, food comes to between \$9 and \$10 a week and it takes careful managing to keep it that low. But no skimping on the essential points. Milk and butter are never wasted but neither are they ever restricted. 'The children can bread their butter if they want to,' Edith says, and the good effects of that policy are strikingly evident in the plump sturdiness of Beverly Jane and Dean Wellington Case. To keep the grocery bill otherwise within bounds Edith puts up some two hundred cans of vegetables and fruit every year. A quarter of that is canned peaches, because the family are crazy about peaches in baked dumplings and upside-down cakes. The two little peach trees on the Cases' house lot yielded almost three bushels last year, and there are also grapes and raspberries. Economy or not, the Cases get thoroughly and enjoyably fed. They are all fit as fiddles, with no doctors' bills further to harass the limited budget.

The old Pontiac runs on about \$6 a month because it isn't used at all extensively. During their first few years they changed it regularly every year but now, asking only six thousand miles annually, they are able to hang on to the car to the last splutter. Instead of driving it to work, Stanley leaves it for Edith to use for shopping and running Beverly to school when bad weather makes this advisable, and clubs up with a couple of other fellows on petrol in somebody else's car. Regularly every morning he walks a mile or so into the centre of Dearborn to wait for them on a street corner.

Fuel and light average \$9.50 a month, newspapers and magazines \$12.50 a year. Insurances bites a bigger hole—about \$10 a month. The company substracts from Stanley's pay the premiums on his \$2,000 group insurance.

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

As the nucleus of an educational fund, the Cases carry a \$500 endowment policy on each child, and \$1,000 on Edith, plus \$320 that came along for practically nothing additional on the children's policies. And \$9 a year hospital insurance on Stanley. Taxes? 'Just the Michigan sales tax,' says Edith, 'but that's plenty. I'd scare myself if I figured up what that comes to.' Throw in that \$35 a month rent—and the way of close management is clearly visible.

Yet the Cases own—and mostly paid cash for—a big electric refrigerator, an electric washer (Edith does all the family wash herself), a vacuum cleaner and an elderly foot-power sewing machine, as well as car and radio. It takes much foresight and juggling to tuck away small bills against such purchases and keep them tucked. Knowing a good job when he sees it, Stanley leaves all that confidently to Edith, although projected major expenses get discussed by the two of them before being decided upon.

Their whole end of Michigan, of course, means the motor industry as New Bedford used to mean whaling. Directly or indirectly half the population work or have worked for General Motors or Chrysler or Ford or one of the independents. Everybody within fifty miles of Detroit's Cadillac Square breathed more easily when the 1939 Chrysler strike was settled. Hack drivers say you could just feel people's pocketbooks loosening up inside a couple of days. Dearborn, where the Cases live because rents are low, air good, and schools better, is particularly overshadowed by the motor-made name of Ford. This Ford airport, the Fords' Dearborn Inn, the famous Greenfield Village where Henry Ford's wealth and worship of the frugal past have reproduced the buildings and customs of the mid-nineteenth century, lie just over the horizon. The Cases, however, have never been

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sight-seeing in Dearborn Village. It's just like New Yorkers and a view from the Empire State Building. But they do like to go skating in winter on Ford's Pond, also near by.

Even the Cases' house ties up with motors. They used to rent a somewhat larger place, which had a room for the children to play in, at the same \$35 rental. But their landlord there raised the rent to \$40 a month when the General Motors strike a few years back won all employees a five cents an hour rise in pay. To avoid seeing most of the rise automatically swallowed up, the Cases had to look elsewhere. The present house was a regular pig-pen when they moved in. The previous tenants had been so shiftless that the neighbours are still full of stories—the way the baby would cry alone all night while mamma and papa were out drinking beer at roadhouses. When she saw all the filth and muck they left Edith Case sat down and cried. But presently, feeling the better for it, she rolled up the sleeves over her long capable arms and went to work. The house is pin-neat and whistle-clean now. But no bigger.

That is another reason why the Cases are planning to build. Now they have only a small living room, a tiny bedroom for mother and father, another of the same size for Beverly and Dean, a miniature bathroom, a midget kitchen where the stove interferes with the cupboard doors, the big refrigerator looms like a white-enamelled cliff, and the furnace and boiler of the heating plant fill one cramped corner to make sure there won't be room to swing a cat. In bad weather the kitchen linoleum is the children's only play space. Although Edith puts up crisply but good-naturedly with the riot round her feet as she works between stove and sink, she would be the last to deny that she could use more room.

Still, the little house is more eligible than a good many

others scattered over the Dearborn plateau around them, perhaps two to the block with vacant lots between. WPA is working now to give them a better road than the dusty muddy track that was there when they moved in, and a paved boulevard running straight into Detroit—ten miles away—lies a hundred yards behind the house. The nearest neighbouring family are highly respectable citizens with three nice kids, enough older than Beverly and Dean to be stimulating playmates.

The grey, cosy-looking, single-storied house itself is buried in young maple trees which make it almost invisible in summer and keep it astonishingly cool—last year, when Detroit was sizzling, it was never over 73°F. inside. On many summer mornings Edith would start the heater. The comfortable furniture that Stanley and Edith bought before the children came, when both had jobs and made almost \$3,000 a year between them, is rather too much for the present confined space, but warmingly reminds them that they have been married over ten years and grown closer together every one of those 3,650 days. The old Pontiac beds down cosily in the neat garage out at the back, which has extra room for storage and the children's scooters and express wagons. That new house will give them a great kick. But it won't be essential to happiness for these good-natured experts in making do, because money has to stretch a long way.

One thing Stanley will insist on when finally picking a building lot is a spot for a garden. On account of heavy shade it's tough even to grow grass where they are now. Two summers ago he had a swell garden—at a lake camp belonging to his brother-in-law where the Cases spent all the hot months that year. Stanley motored in to work daily and Edith and the kids luxuriated in bathing and scampering round. During the long daylight-saving evenings and over week-ends they all worked in the garden

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in their bathing suits and then fell into the lake to wash off the grit. Stanley says it was the prettiest thing he ever saw in his life: 'Real black dirt and little green leaves poking out of it in nice straight rows. I tell you, it was a pleasure just to look at it.' And an economical pleasure. Edith canned everything that would grow. They are still eating the Kentucky Wonder beans that they hoed so industrially that summer.

This coming summer they will try to take the children, old enough by now, on modest week-end motor jaunts. The Cases have to make the most of the week-ends left by a five-day week because Stanley's job includes no formal vacation. The company rank and file get an annual layoff during the re-tooling season, when the plant is being prepared for next year's models, but that is the very time when Stanley, who must see that gigantic machines to stamp out auto parts are properly aligned down to  $\frac{1}{10,000}$  inch, is working hardest. January and February, when half weeks usually crop up, are relatively useless for getting away. If he likes, he can have up to a month's leave of absence without pay. Before he became a father he often took advantage of that, but nowadays he says he can't afford such luxuries.

The children's best interests are practically never out of these earnest parents' minds. They have definitely made up their minds, for instance, to stop at two children because to have more would make it far harder to give them the advantages Stanley and Edith want for them.

And advantages they will have. Stanley has long felt that he robbed himself in not getting more education. Son of a skilled carpenter in Plymouth, Pennsylvania, he quit high school after his first year to go to work. He clerked in a grocery store in Wilkes-Barre, worked in a silk mill, and then came up to Detroit during the war boom to start his twenty-two years in the motor

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industry as a \$25-a-week tool checker in the old Chalmers plant, then making caterpillar tractors for the government. Now he is taking courses two nights a week in trigonometry and advanced machining. Funny, he says, but when you have a real use for mathematics, they aren't half so dull as they were in school. He's hoping that such knowledge will give him a step up in both rank and pay at Cadillac, as it very likely will. The company encourages such behaviour and Stanley has been on their payroll seventeen years, as a presentation gold watch on his wrist testifies.

Several small pieces of furniture that Stanley's father made for his newly wedded son show how honestly he came by his instincts for skill with tools. Part Dutch, part English in extraction, the old gentleman was still handy and flexible enough at sixty-three to take on an entirely new and demanding trade with success—pattern-making in the Ford plant. Having moved his whole family to Detroit in 1919, on account of Stanley's descriptions of the opportunities there, he owned his own house and had his own business as a builder before the depression put him back at the workbench. But that never bothered him. He loved handling tools as a Chinese mandarin loves handling jade. He died early last year and Stanley's mother did not survive him long. Stanley never says much about it but he is still showing the effects of that loss.

Every American town can show women like Edith—warm-hearted, feet-on-the-ground, dry-spoken, bright-glanced realists—the type that pups and children and grocery clerks love. But the United States can't take all the credit for her. Her parents, Scottish and Irish, are still carrying on on the large farm near Perth, Ontario, where she was born and reared. The little river on that farm, where the fish grab at the hook the moment it hits the water, is the only place, says Stanley, he could ever

see any point in fishing. Lots of young Canadians, their names usually beginning with 'Mac,' have trickled across the Detroit River to make first-rate American citizens. And Edith Playfair Case is one of the best of them, for all the fact that her sole fancy accomplishment is an ability to pick out a tune on a piano which she still calls 'God Save the King.'

Old Mrs. Playfair still runs the Ontario farmhouse with the meticulous efficiency that made Edith Elizabeth so brisk a housekeeper. Never a speck of dust survived Saturday evening to disgrace the house on the day of rest. To this day Edith would never dream of using a mop on her kitchen floor, which takes a lot of cleaning because of the coal dust from stoking the heater. 'Never owned a mop in my life,' she says, looking up from her hands-and-knees operations with a cloth and a bucket; 'neither did my mother and she's seventy-three by now. Dirty things.' Even Skippy knows that when the tall, slender lady with the straightforward manner of speech is down on her knees in the kitchen, small dogs had better lie up in their boxes till the floor dries. Paw marks would be just as thoroughly frowned on as coal dust.

When Edith decided to try her luck as a business girl she already knew most things about most kinds of jobs. She learned bookkeeping and the elements of law at the Ontario Ladies' College at Digby, where she studied just as capably as she played tennis, at which she was school champion. After leaving school she worked awhile in a Montreal trust company, keeping books. Then she went to Detroit and in a short time was assistant children's hosiery buyer at the great J. L. Hudson store there. She was making as much money then as Stanley earns now.

But fate was waiting for her in the person of the curly-headed, soft-spoken son of some people named Case

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from whom she rented her room. Edith was a crack athlete at softball, basketball, ice hockey, as well as at tennis, as the lightness of her step and the polo-pony liteness of her figure still show. Young Stanley Case, although only a 125-pounder, felt the same way about basketball, baseball, and bowls. Presently he was going to see his first ice hockey game with the personable young lady roomer. He soon became infected with her good Canadian enthusiasm for ice hockey. Things progressed. Eight months later they met during a lunch hour at the county clerk's office and, without any fuss whatever, walked out man and wife.

That was 1929, the year of the big wind. The young couple rented a nice little apartment on their combined incomes, week-ended gloriously in a shiny new car each summer, skated themselves blue in the face together during the winter, bought a site on an upstate lake for a week-end cabin. Not a bad investment either. To get funds to start their new house, they recently sold that lot for a trifle more than they had paid for it. Stanley had over \$500 in the GM employees' savings scheme, due almost to double in less than ten years. He kept working during the depression, being a steady goer of long standing, but times were hard anyway.

After five years of marriage and at the pit of the depression, the Cases' reaction to hard times was characteristically game. They started a family. With utterly satisfactory results. Success is plainly visible in the proud way Mrs. Case speaks of little Beverly's capable handling of the small change she accumulates and with which she pays her own way at school parties and makes her own little contribution to the Community Fund. And in Mr. Case's delight in playing ball every evening with little Dean, who is going to be a real athlete if his father has anything to do with it. His chubby little paws are already handling



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a baseball-size rubber ball pretty well for a four-year-old, his young toes making a notable impression on a football, and his father hopes, with some justification in the big bones and sturdy build of his heir, that he will have plenty of size to go with skill.

Dean is mad about water too. When Stanley ducks him as a preparation for his first swimming lessons, scheduled for this summer, his invariable response is sputter . . . sputter . . . 'Duck me again, daddy, duck me again!' If not carefully watched, he splashes into any given lake with his clothes on. On one such occasion—when he was three—he got so far out that his nose was awash and Stanley had to rush in after him, also fully clothed. Calling did no good. There he was soaking wet and happy as a clam, incapable of returning to prosaic dry land until physical force made him.

Beverly has supplied some of the more dismaying complications. To keep the income up as long as possible, Mrs. Case worked along at her job until rather close to her time. That may have been one reason why Beverly was a four-pound baby whom neither doctor nor parents thought they could keep alive. For four months she lay on a pillow with life barely flickering, while her mother practically gave up sleeping to give her frequent feedings and other necessary care—bringing her own weight down to an absurd 99 pounds. It cost over a hundred dollars for special baby food, not to mention doctors' bills, to pull Beverly through, and she still shows signs of having started life with so severe a handicap. So bang went most of the savings. With Edith quitting her job, the income was cut in half besides.

But they still have their fun on the cheap. Skating costs nothing in winter. The radio is free entertainment and the children earnestly follow numerous kids' programmes. The radio-desk which supplies it all was a

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birthday present from Edith to Stanley, dating back to the first year of their marriage. 'Not a better-sounding radio in the city of Detroit,' Stanley says staunchly. They haven't seen a movie since they moved into their present house. But with Edith on the job, staying at home works out pretty cheerfully.

She and Stanley get plenty of excitement out of games like five hundred, tripoli, monopoly, and Chinese chequers. Chinese chequers is ranking favourite, with Edith taking it so hard that, when beaten, Stanley says, she goes to bed talking to herself. Memorable occasions in the Case household bear no relation to expense. Last Christmas the whole family talked for days about Edith's ingenuity in working out a Christmas-picture salad for dinner with red currant jelly, pears, and cream cheese. On her last birthday there was a lawn party for sixteen people in the backyard, with cookies and lemonade costing so little that Edith refuses even to try to figure out exactly how much.

Stanley has been off sports, too, since his parents died. But he used to be bowling captain at the Detroit Industrial League and now has a kind of hankering to get into a league again. The Cases dance occasionally when some neighbour gives a little party. But most of the neighbourhood entertaining consists of the weekly afternoon meetings of Mrs. Case's handiwork club. Last winter it did quilting and this year it is crocheting rugs, with Edith wielding a skilful hook, following magazine instructions and then branching out on her own. For refreshments when the club meets at her house, she dodges the danger of hopeless crowding in her small living room by serving on trays that the ladies can hold in their laps. It works fine, she says, and the novelty of it sort of amuses people.

Church might enlarge their social life. But the Cases aren't churchgoers. Stanley feels that another unfortunate

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part of his upbringing was too much church. Methodist reared in the sternest of old-fashioned traditions, dragged to services three times every Sunday, he is now so numb about religion that he hardly steps inside a church from one year's end to the next. Beverly is taken regularly to Episcopalian Sunday school by a niece of Stanley's. But Edith, whose Baptist family gave her much the same religious background as her husband's, says Sunday morning is the only time she ever has to relax in.

Both she and Stanley wish vaguely that their rearing had allowed them to feel differently about religious life now. 'If I feel bad,' Edith says, 'the one place that will make me feel better is church. It's queer we don't do more about it. Maybe we will when the children are older.'

As for to-day, however, church is like politics—outside their immediate realm of values. Both vote regularly, usually Republican. But their only strong political reaction consists of an instinct against shouting extremes. After having listened to Father Coughlin for a good while, they stopped tuning in on him when he got the bit too firmly in his teeth. And Stanley has nothing but contempt for the crackpot weekly paper of one of Father Coughlin's crank imitators which is regularly stuck in the handle of the front screen door.

Since he is only four, Dean's formal education has not yet begun. Beverly is already finding social training among others her own age in the nursery school end of the near-by Edison Public School. But so far the children's life centres largely round the small grey house among the maples with their two neat little beds in the back bedroom. In that house backtalk is the one thing never tolerated. Some whacking takes place on occasion, but sitting motionless in a chair is the form of punishment that seems to carry most weight. Dean's acute wriggling

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embarrassment at being scolded makes it easy to handle him with a few firm words. Ructions that occur because Beverly is nervous and Dean energetic cloud up and shower down and clear away as quickly as a thunderstorm.

Theoretically the children help clear off tables and do some dishwiping. Here Beverly takes careful handling—she will buckle to on those chores of her own volition, but, if asked or told to rally round, stubbornly refuses. Mrs. Case isn't sure she yet knows just how to handle the general help-round-the-house situation anyway. She knows that it's good for kids to have small responsibilities to shoulder. But, she confesses, she hasn't quite got the patience to watch them fumbling lackadaisically at a job that she could do herself with three quick twists of her capable hands.

For all such minor jarrings, however, which merely prove that this is a human household, not a perfectionist's experiment in child rearing, there is a mighty warmth and geniality between parents and kids. As busy a mother as Mrs. Case has few deliberate interludes for playing games with or reading aloud to her young. But she manages to get exactly the same effect. 'You'd think I was crazy,' she says, 'if you saw me standing here in the kitchen singing silly songs to them that I make up out of my own head. The silliest stuff you ever heard—but they think it's fine.' And cooking dinner at the same time of course, eyes bright, cheeks flushed and mouth grinning a little at her own highly successful foolishness.

It appears that you can get a full year's supply of awfully satisfactory living for \$1,600, even in a house too small for the job.

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### *The CASES' Budget*

'When Stan isn't working steady, we just eat and pay the rent,' says Mrs. Case. 'When work gets steady again, we buy things that have to be bought.' Here are principal items of their yearly living costs:

<i>Food</i>	\$468·00
<i>Rent</i>	420·00
<i>Fuel and light</i>	114·00
<i>Transportation</i> (family car, \$6 per month, \$72; Mr. Case's transportation, \$10 per month, \$120)	192·00
<i>Insurance</i>	120·00
<i>Maintenance of health</i> (Mr. Case's dental bill)	35·00
<i>Newspapers, magazines</i>	12·50
<i>Clothing</i>	150·00
<i>Miscellaneous</i> (charity, recreation, etc.)	88·50
	\$1,600·00



The  
**JAMES DANIEL O'BRIENS**  
*of Brooklyn, New York*

**J**AMES DANIEL O'BRIEN of Brooklyn, New York, says his family back in Roxbury, Massachusetts, don't approve of him. When his wife wonders bewilderingly why they never inquire about the children he tells her, 'They just have their own ideas. They can't understand how anybody can be on relief.' Jim O'Brien finds it understandable enough. You may have a trade, be good at it, belong to the union and possess all the stimulus to earn that lies in a devoted wife and five nice kids—and yet just plain be unable to get work. His last job was around Christmas, 1939. But in 1940 and 1941 and 1942 you still have to go on eating.

The fifth child was new last March—a husky boy named Richard. That is as yet unofficial because, with relief amounting to only \$33.10 every two weeks, the O'Briens have not yet had a christening. It's a shame, of course, to let a child go unchristened so long. The O'Briens are also uncomfortable because lack of Sunday clothes keeps them from going to Mass. But there is nothing else slack about them. Jim is extremely enterprising about keeping busy. With five children and a five-room cold-water flat to keep strictly in order, Honey, as both Jim and the children call Mrs. O'Brien, has too little spare time to gad about much, even if she had anything else to gad in but several bungalow aprons and a ten-year-old coat. When Jim married her she had an \$11-a-week job in a pencil factory which she kept right up until her oldest child was born. Now, she says, 'There's nothing

like having a home and children round you. That's the best thing, I think.'

The ground-floor 'railroad apartment' that costs them \$19 a month is dark as Tophet in the three in-between rooms, and lack of winter fuel makes the front room unusable in winter. Two broken-down beds take in the whole family—Jim and Edwin (10) and James (5) in one, Honey and Patricia (4) and Edna (2) in the other, with young Richard snuggled into his baby carriage. Life goes determinedly on in the kitchen, light and clean, with a good stove and a linoleumed floor. In spring the clutter of kids on the kitchen floor clears out to the backyard that goes with the flat—a bare, dusty but amply fenced space for rolling round in.

Handsome kids, if pale; all like their heavy-browed, Irish-mouthed father. Edwin is doing well in public school—which happily for the O'Briens' peace of mind is right next door. The proximity of the school, eliminating traffic hazards, and the backyard, yielding dividends of sunshine, were their chief reasons for taking this particular flat. Jim and Honey are both convinced that to turn the kids loose in Brooklyn streets to learn fighting, bad language, and playing cards for pennies is unthinkable. Their fear of dangerous outside influences on the children is so strong that they even avoid all contact with their neighbours. But Edna Makoska O'Brien, simple, good-humoured, utterly persistent in what she believes, and utterly adjusted to being wife and mother, could raise children well anywhere.

She was Jim's first girl—a pretty Polish damsel, not quite fourteen when he met her in New York's time-honoured way—sitting on the stoop of a hot evening chatting with the neighbours. He was fresh from sea then—at fourteen and in his second year of high school he had run away from home, shipping first on a Gloucester fisherman and





Seventeen cents a day a person fed the seven members of the O'Brien family when they were on relief. James Daniel O'Brien is one of 20,000 painters in Greater New York. About 15 per cent of U.S. families receive relief in cash or work.

The surplus commodities depot is a life-saver to the O'Briens, but there are few surplus clothes in the O'Brien wardrobe. The five children wear them out too fast as well as outgrowing them.



Baby Richard O'Brien gets his backyard airing in a doll carriage which was given to the family. The backyard is an essential part of Mrs. O'Brien's living standard. She will not have her children playing in the street.



Edna and Jimmy play in this front room only in summer. The O'Briens cannot afford to use the heater or furnish the room. The floor is stained but soap-and-water clean, like the rest of the modest flat.

Mrs. O'Brien — her whole family calls her Honey — gives two-year-old Edna a bath in the kitchen sink. There is no bathtub in the O'Briens' \$19-a-month 'rail-road' flat, but Honey won't allow cleanliness to be neglected on that account.





The youngsters wear out shoes even quicker than clothes. The pistol seen above is one of the few toys in the flat. Shopping is not easy, for the relief budget allows only about \$10 a week for food. At nights Jim O'Brien takes a course in lettering and sign-painting.



presently A.B. and quartermaster in merchant service all over the world—colliers, tankers, freighters; the Far East, Alaska, Panama. He remembers vividly refugees pouring into Constantinople when Smyrna burned, and he has had shore leave in every port from here to Kamchatka. When strikes and depression made seagoing jobs scarce, he did manual labour round New York—for an East Side building supply house, a Bronx contractor, on the docks. But, as every seaman must, he had learned to handle a paintbrush. When he decided to make a career out of that, he bought a couple of books, studied and practised at home, cramming two years' training into six months. For all his initiative and ability, luck was against him, however. His change-over into painting roughly coincided with the start of the depression, so work has never been plentiful. After all, Greater New York has twenty thousand painters. But Jim says, 'I figure if you can't get along here, you can't get along anywhere.'

During the huge gaps left by unemployment, this black-haired, knotty-built Irishman is doggedly working away at becoming a more valuable workman. If a chance appears it will find him armed with many skills. He is in his third and last year of a free commercial art course at the Mechanic's Institute, learning sign painting and freehand drawing, hoping for a summer Y.M.C.A. course in outdoor-billboard work. Last year he spent his two extra evenings at Stuyvesant High School studying Fine Arts. By the light of a dangling electric bulb in a cold, windowless room in the flat, he toils away night after night on what the school tells him to do, unusually careful because spoiling an expensive piece of drawing-board is a major tragedy. Money for paper, pencils, and paints is borrowed from one of his wife's sisters. His nickel subway fare to and from the Institute is all they can spare from the relief money.

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Honey is just as skilful about penny stretching. The relief budget, figured down to a gnat's heel, allows close to \$10 a week to eat on. So the O'Briens don't pick their own menus—they eat whatever the chain store cut-price specials happen to be that day or week, and they probably haven't bought anything at regular market prices in years. Canned vegetables in sales cost much less than fresh and, Honey has heard, have much the same vitamin content. Evaporated milk—irradiated for vitamin content—is a nourishing staple drunk with the weak coffee they all take, even the small children. The clinic doesn't approve, Honey says, but the children like coffee and it must be good for you or they wouldn't give it to you in hospitals. In general, however, Honey doesn't ignore the clinic's advice, having every respect for the way they've helped her handle the new baby and attentively reading all the way through the government booklets on child care they give her.

Their two quarts a day of fluid Grade B milk go on the hot cereal—oatmeal or farina—which is all they have for breakfast. Every week Mrs. O'Brien gets whatever is going from the federal surplus commodities depot—maybe a few eggs, a pound of butter, a pound of prunes. The expense of soap powder is dodged by tying scraps of laundry soap in a rag and swishing to make suds. All the baby's laundry is done at home but the rest is combined with Honey's mother's bundle to be sent out at minimum 'wetwash' rates, dried in the back yard and ironed in the kitchen, at a cost of \$1 a month. Lunch, if any, is toast and coffee. The one big meal, toward evening, is a big soup-bone soup or meat balls, with left-overs putting body into spaghetti sauce next day. It keeps them all in fair shape and Mrs. O'Brien is having no difficulty in nursing the baby. And, with so many privations, not getting quite enough food is nothing special to kick about.

## THE JAMES DANIEL O'BRIENS

Last winter, for instance, they all slept in sweaters for lack of adequate bedclothes. Honey hears you can get quilts at 'the welfare', but she hesitates to go prying after things that aren't offered her. Plenty of pride here—pride in a clean house, for all the scanty, rickety furniture, in keeping the kids up to scratch, in the painstaking craftsmanship that goes into the three-masted ship model that daddy is making with no tools but a knife in the intervals of study and job seeking.

Paid amusement of any kind is obviously out of the question. One of Mrs. O'Brien's sisters may take Edwin to Saturday movies when he's good, which he usually is. Nobody else ever sees a movie. The kids get a good deal of fun out of the comic strips in the papers that are borrowed from one of Mrs. O'Brien's brothers. Various members of Honey's family, who live near by, drop round for a chat. Jim brings home books from the library—a novel for Honey, a couple of textbooks for himself each time. And then there is the radio. Jim listens religiously to all the news broadcasts, none the less honestly concerned because he feels he doesn't understand all the complications of the foreign situation. Honey seldom listens—plenty of noise around the house without going out of your way to get more, she says.

Naturally they worry. Anybody would. But Jim sticks stubbornly to his daydreams about doing well enough to get the boys to college. In spite of the grey streaks in his hair, he is still young, only thirty-five, and holding together with true Irish pluck. And it probably helps a lot to have Honey around, soft-voiced, brown-haired, stocky and trusty, and to be tucked in every night by a comically solemn little four-year-old daughter, who is devoted to daddy.

He will stand a good chance of coming through all right. If anything like a chance ever comes.





*The*  
**JOE GREIDER CRICKS**  
*of Cucamonga, California*

**W**HITE with dust and eucalyptus-shaded, the road cuts away from pavement and heads straight for the looming, white-scarred face of Cucamonga Peak, only to hesitate presently at an extremely used-looking barn and peter out abreast of a one-storey house buried in greenery. Lemon groves, thick-set and shiny-leaved, stretch on from there in all directions. In and about these premises you will find Mr. and Mrs. Joe Greider Crick, the four younger Cricks, and the span of mules, two cows, four dogs, odd poultry, pet snakes and turtles that make up the rest of the household.

Two hundred thousand Californians get a living from three hundred thousand such acres. Citrus fruit bulks bigger in California statistics than the fabulous movie industry. Nothing special about the Crick's livelihood. But there is something exhilaratingly special about the way they live. Mr. Crick, husky and forty-five, says it combines the best features of camping out with the best of permanent abode. That is about the size of it. These people's good-natured refusal to let life get distractingly complicated rests solidly on the unpretentious common sense that has always underlain American life—sometimes thin but always strong and elastic as a ribbon of steel. Thoreau and Abraham Lincoln would have thoroughly approved.

The rambling white house against the lemon grove makes all that cheerfully clear. No dining room—the Cricks find it handier to eat on bridge tables set up in the living room and struck as soon as cleared. No bedrooms

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—just a long sleeping porch, double bed in the centre, children's cots on each side, where the whole family are accommodated dormitory-fashion. The cost of the missing bedrooms and dining-room went into a second bathroom—very useful in a large family, into a concrete wading pool deep enough to teach small fry the rudiments of swimming, into a darkroom and special studio room for Mrs. Crick, slender and forty-four, who is an ardent amateur photographer as well as an ardent and decidedly unamateurish mother. No rugs in the living room. They tried rugs, but ranch dirt would get tracked in and sweeping and beating seemed wasted energy when bare boards were so much more easily kept clean. But the white-plastered end wall of that living room, displaying only a simple fireplace and a stunning reproduction of a golden Van Gogh landscape, would make any professional decorator gurgle with admiration. Telephone, electric refrigerator, motor-car, sewing machine, radio, washing machine, are all there to prove that these people are not cracked-wheat and simple-life fanatics—just too busy with things they care for to bother with anything outside their own personal list of essentials.

'This house grew by evolution,' Mr. Crick says, standing in the backyard and grinning fondly at its irregular walls and roof-lines. He ought to know. He personally planned its gradual additions, took a large hand in building them to boot, and carefully tailored everything to the exact needs of each individual. The darkroom shelves come down within an inch of Mrs. Crick's small, well-poised head—she was carefully measured before her husband started his carpentry. While little Gladys, aged five, was still short enough to risk drowning if she fell in, the pool had a high wire fence round it. Now that her nose would safely reach above water, the fence has given place to ornamental planting.



Mr. and Mrs. Joe Greider Crick say that their Cucamonga, California, house combines 'all the best features of camping out and permanent abode'. The Cricks have fun at family picnics in their own citrus grove, on camping trips in the Sierras, and in the swimming pool which Joe Crick built pretty much with his own hands. The total cost was around \$200.



Martha, Bob, May, and even little Gladys Crick co-operate in the family housekeeping. The Cricks think it's fun to do things together. Bob Crick's culinary speciality is turning out pancakes.



Gladys helps her father paint the sink he's remodelled for Mrs. Crick. Each child has household work to do - and some of the jobs are paid for! Gladys's share includes table-setting, dish-wiping, and tidying-up.

## THE JOE GREIDER CRICKS

Now that that sort of thing has gone on for years, house, yard, and complete mode of life fit the Cricks as flexibly and neatly as their own ruddy skins. It never occurs to Mrs. Crick, skilfully running through her daily cooking, cleaning, baking, mending, purchasing, to crave the more conventional extra rooms that would make those tasks harder and longer. She is definitely not the type to hanker after things just because others have them. While studying at Columbia University as a girl, she and a couple of others thought it a very stimulating lark to share a cold-water flat on New York's lower West Side with packing boxes for furniture. It is a far cry from that to the simple and notably comfortable serenity of her present living-room, of course. But both environments reflect her instinct to think for herself. The Crick house is clearly subordinate to the life that goes on in it. When dishes threaten to become a burden, paper plates are brought out. For between-meal snacks, a crate of small oranges stands in the back porch, where Crick children can help themselves with minimum fuss and bother.

Simplifying household jobs enables Mrs. Crick to do everything shipshape and yet be active in the local community—as assistant leader of Girl Scouts, worker in the local baby clinic, a Parent-Teacher Association member, and awhile back a doughty fighter in the campaign against the Ham-and-Eggs movement that still has California holding its breath. Her husband, who works from 5.30 a.m. to 6 p.m., as lemon ranchers must, is nevertheless a Mason, a member of Rotary, and a director of the Sierra Madre Lamanda citrus co-operative which markets his fruit for him through the mammoth California Fruit Growers' Exchange. Sometimes that sort of thing takes both parents away from home at the same time. In that case the agreeable lady who turns

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

up at the ranch once a week to keep the business books can be called on for the extra job of keeping an eye on the Crick youngsters.

As Gladys Gosney, Mrs. Crick was daughter of a man with lots of energy and the habit of thinking for himself. A young lawyer of old American stock, he came West for his health, went into ranching and banking, prospered—and, seeing social common sense in the eugenics movement, devoted much of his later time and money to founding and fostering the Human Betterment Association, the nation's most conspicuous agency of eugenics propaganda. Still living in near-by Pasadena, where he reared his family, he is still battling for eugenics. After graduating from Occidental College, Gladys got through training in household economics at Santa Barbara Normal, as well as the rudiments of nurses' training during the war years when she wanted to qualify herself for going to France. A year at Mills College in San Francisco, art work at New York's Cooper Union, plus other studies at Columbia, finished off a singularly well-rounded—and down-to-earth—education.

Then she was visiting friends who owned and lived on a 360,000-acre ranch in New Mexico. Some ten thousand head of cattle shared this space without crowding. The outfit's foreman was a stocky, ruddy, easy-spoken chap from Colorado with nothing but his salary, a very level head, two sizable and capable hands, and the kind of gentle competence that horses, children, and baulky machinery instantly recognize. Two and a half years of high school in Pueblo and six months' study in the Colorado Agricultural College were as far as textbooks had taken him. But he had learned a great deal beyond that from successive jobs including the Army Signal Corps and the United States Department of Agriculture. During the war he was sent overseas on a

## THE JOE GREIDER CRICKS

special assignment as a khaki-clad Pied Piper to superintend ridding French army warehouses of rats. His smiling blue eyes and the fact that he was unmistakably a man to tie to, impressed the young lady visitor considerably. Inside two weeks the question had been popped—the idea just seemed to come along spontaneously—and she had gone home to think it over, as is the Gosney habit.

The result was that the New Mexico ranchman lost the best foreman he ever had or probably ever will have. Mr. Gosney approved of the match so warmly that he offered to turn over to his future son-in-law the management of two hundred acres of lemons he owned away out beyond Pasadena. Joe Crick was crazy about handling animals—still is, luckily, in view of the number round the place—but by no means sure how much he would care for lemons. Several months trying it out at Cucamonga convinced him that lemons would be pretty interesting, too. So the nucleus of the present house was built for some \$2,500—perhaps \$1,000 cash has since been put into it—and the first Presbyterian Church in Pasadena was the scene of a very promising marriage.

The ranch, originally purchased by Mrs. Gosney with real estate development in mind, and later devoted to lemons as a more feasible project, was turned over to the Human Betterment Association after it became a going concern. The association now pays Mr. Crick's salary as manager. The Cricks live on the salary and are buying twenty acres, including the house, for their own, paying off with the lemons on their twenty. That gives them a little more than \$2,500 a year to spend on the six of them.

Like other farmers anywhere, lemon ranchers must battle over-production-depressed prices and the weather's callous antics. Mr. Crick earnestly supports the efforts

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of co-operative marketing to keep supply and demand more or less in balance and get him something of a profit per acre, and is outspokenly proud of the half-human sorting and washing machinery in his co-operative's efficient packing plant. Lemon trees bear all year round, so he has no such thing as a slack season. But California is a little north of the tropical belt where nature originally developed lemons. Fine for the flavour, Californians say, and worth the trouble even though, in the chancy winter-time, when the radio warns of impending frost, no citrus rancher ever considers going to bed at all. Those acres of trees must be instantly sown thick with oil heaters that require as much hourly attention as sick babies to keep warming the air above the danger point. On such occasions, Mrs. Crick never sees bed either--coffee and food and supplies must be kept moving to the men on the job. That is just part of being a citrus-man's wife.

Their first baby died when a little over two. When May arrived not so long afterward, she proved to have a serious calcium deficiency that took six years' fighting to straighten out. Nothing for it but that Mrs. Crick should leave Joe on the ranch and move in to her old home in Pasadena, where doctors would be right on hand for the baby. Joe came into town when he could, but it was dismayingly seldom. Such successive troubles might have daunted some parents. But the Cricks went serenely on to have three more children, intelligently spaced and all brilliantly healthy. May is fourteen by now, an honour student and strong as you please. Martha is twelve; Bobby, nine; Gladys, five.

Some parents live for their children, some build a household on two levels--the adult's and the child's. The Cricks do neither. Small Gladys, who stalks about the rugless floors with the innocent perkiness of a fresh-hatched chick, is a member of the family on



## THE JOE GREIDER CRICKS

precisely the same basis as her mother. When May developed snake-keeping as a hobby, her father made her glass-fronted cages out of the field boxes that lemon pickers use—just as he made tanks for Mrs. Crick's darkroom out of old storage-battery containers.

Discipline is informal and co-operative, except for a rare spanking. 'The only troubles we ever have,' says Mr. Crick, who has quite as much to do with child handling as his wife, 'are due to bullheadedness on both sides.' He is subject to family rules like everybody else. When parent or small fry fails to hang a garment promptly on the proper hook, a two-cent fine is exacted. All fines are pooled in a fund that pays the family's way to the movies, which they attend *en masse* perhaps twice a month. Back when the ranch and family were getting under way the Cricks never bothered with movies at all. But as the children came along, movies—not on school nights, of course, and picked from the recommendations in *Parent's Magazine*—make sense and fun for all of them. And fit neatly into the Crick economic system, since fines as a disciplinary measure are a useful idea in their own right.

Each child has household work to do. They take turns at dishwashing. Little Gladys does her share of table setting, dishwiping, and keeping the house tidy. Some jobs are paid for. Clearing up the backyard, for instance, is Bobby's special responsibility at thirty-five cents a week. The rest of the yard is divided into sections that the girls look after. Bobby and May collaborate at chicken keeping and sell the family the eggs. Anyone who makes a pitcher of lemonade, which all the Cricks like to have on hand, gets a flat fee for the job. Martha is counted on as the family ice-cream expert—homemade ice-cream flavoured with chocolate and melted-down peppermints is a weekly treat. Table clearing and chicken

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tending are considered no more and no less important than lemon raising.

This spontaneous co-operative runs so smoothly because everybody in it is comrade and co-worker of everybody else. The idea, say Mr. and Mrs. Crick, is to give the children sound information on how things work and then make them rely on their own common sense. There seems to be enough common sense among them to solve most problems. When they tried a 'suggestion box' where family members who saw room for improvement in the home could get the matter off their minds, it stayed practically empty and ignored for months.

Milk from the two cows and the lowish cost of green-stuff in Southern California help keep the proportion of income that goes to food well below the national average. But even so, a hard-working ranchman and four children who are ramping around outdoors every spare minute—not to mention one spaniel, two Sealyhams, and an enormous Great Dane—eat to the tune of well over \$2 a day. The dogs co-operate by filling up about halfway on skim milk. And nobody fusses. Her family have no favourite dishes, says Mrs. Crick, half in pride, half in dismay—they assail everything like enthusiastic wolves. Taxes alone took \$150 last year. Healthy as they are, proper care of teeth and odd doctors' bills come to a good \$180 a year.

Mr. Crick was by no means eager to figure out what it costs to run the big black Buick sedan that they bought secondhand a couple of years ago. If they knew the worst, he said, they might have to make themselves stay at home oftener. The children get to school by bus and bicycle. But a car is a necessity for business as well as gadding and, when completely outdated, can be relegated to ranch jobs. That was what happened to the previous Buick which did them eight years. A couple of

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dollars a week for a woman who comes in to put the wash through the machine is the only place where the household is not pretty well self-paying.

They would like to spend more money on reading or at least read more. The radio gets used a good deal, but May is the only member of the family who manages to work in much literature. Mr. Crick cheerfully admits that he hasn't read anything between board covers in two years and his wife is in almost the same boat. Magazines, of course. *Time*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, the *Reader's Digest*, and the newspaper are all he has time to manage. Mrs. Crick adds the *National Geographic* to that list and seldom gets further.

All outdoors in California weather supplies both a living and a recreation for all of them. Mr. Crick once built a large backyard shed for the children to play in, only to find that, what with bicycles, dogs, the nice Mexican kids down the road, and the infinite amusements of a barnyard and a lemon grove, the children practically never stepped inside it. Luckily, since they haven't much for extras, all outdoors costs little. Last summer, inspired by a photograph he saw somewhere, Mr. Crick designed and built a camping trailer to hook on behind the car. Secondhand running gear, pine plywood, odd fittings forged on the place, made it the neatest gadget that ever ran on wheels. It carries water tanks, a rear-end camp stove like a stockman's chuck wagon, storage for provisions, a centre section that opens up like a gate-leg table gone mad to supply a sleeping floor for the whole family with sleeping equipment and a huge canvas tent cover over all to match. Total cost of this permanent investment in inexpensive fresh air was \$125, not including Mr. Crick's skilful labour.

The only thing it needs to make the Cricks feel completely at home anywhere is accommodation for a load

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of dogs. Spike, Kippy, Mike, and Linda must be left behind when the family roll off for a week-end or longer. They christened the new trailer with a trip up to Sequoia National Park and down into Mexico, where the children ecstatically splashed on the sunny Gulf of California beaches.

That was Joe's first vacation since he came to the ranch eighteen years ago. Come what may, he is determined on other such vacations from now on—they all got a tremendous kick out of it and the children are all old enough now to go along handily.

Good times in the Crick household have nothing to do with expense. Chinese chequers are first-class fun. Or pingpong on a home-made collapsible table. Entertaining can be thrifty, too, with the whole outdoors again for chief attraction. A party at the Cricks' is likely to consist of dining alfresco in the lemon grove where Mr. Crick turns cook for the evening and makes great use of an open fire to produce his famous hamburgers with Lyonnaise potatoes, yeast rolls baked in a Dutch oven, and strong, hot, ranch coffee to wash it all down.

A very handy fellow—in household emergencies he can do anything from a week's wash to a Sunday dinner. He is even keener on working with his hands than on cooking. A while back a carpenter-cousin died and willed him his well-worn but beautifully kept kit of tools. Joe Crick's hands itch every time he looks at the box that holds them. If he ever has more time and not quite so much exacting ranch detail, he will build himself a neat workshop and take to carpentry like a duck to water. As it is, his handiwork is genuine craftsman's stuff. It takes skill to make an efficient photographic enlarger out of odd pieces of wood and the lens and bellows of an old-time camera picked up in a second-hand store.

## THE JOE GREIDER CRICKS

Bobby seems to be tending the same way. He has little enough opinion of schoolwork, although his grades doggedly average a good B. But he is very proud of the kennel he made in school and put together at home, with some supervision from old Mr. Gosney on one of his frequent visits. The commonest sight in the Cricks' all-purpose living-room is father and son, screwdriver in hand, deep in some mechanical problem concerning a bicycle saddle or alarm clock. You would go far to find a better specimen of cow-licked, laconic, wirily bony American kid, just graduated from wanting to be a fireman to wanting to be a locomotive engineer and avidly reading *Chief Wahoo* in the comic strips because he is nuts about anything Indian.

Martha has always wanted to be a nurse. May, with her lively collection of gopher snakes, has decided to be a full-fledged snake specialist. The children will all go to college if they like, and their parents hope they will like. As more of the Mr. Crick's \$15,000 in life insurance gets paid up—the \$8,000 mark is already passed—an educational fund will be started. May, now a slightly precocious junior at near-by Chaffec High School, has picked Pomona College, also near by. Martha has picked Occidental, where her mother went. Bobby, pretty bored with spelling and arithmetic at the local public school, has little interest in college as yet.

In the interests of economic education, May and Martha are now on clothes allowances of \$3-50 a month each. The Cricks are hoping they can raise May a trifle above that figure to take care of a fourteen-year-old girl's more complicated needs. But even the present \$84 a year for two out of six family members is a big chunk out of the \$270 the whole family can spend on clothes. Fortunately for that budget, Mrs. Crick herself is not very clothes conscious. She turns out neat and trim in navy blue

with her hat at a jaunty angle for trips to town, and she understands the subject enough to have helped May and Martha make themselves a dress apiece last summer. But she expects their schools will teach them enough of that sort of thing to get on with. Her own sewing consists largely of patching, darning, and mending, and her own wardrobe is managed with minimum expense and minimum worry. *Harper's Bazaar* lies on her magazine table because of her interest in the photography, not the clothes. Her husband sticks to minimum good suits, shirts, ties, and shoes to match, with the rest of his wardrobe consisting largely of rough-and-ready work clothes for his rough-and-ready job.

Reference here to the good old American institution of Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes would fit—except that the Cricks seldom go to meeting. They are members of the First Presbyterian Church in Pasadena. A while back Mrs. Crick tried her hand at teaching a local Sunday-school class but gave it up as not quite her line. Mr. Crick, raised in a family with strong, strait-laced Pennsylvania Dutch traditions—lots of compulsory church and Sunday-school, with dancing and cards absolutely outlawed—says his boyhood gave him enough church-going to last him the rest of his life. His wife says she thinks the pair of them are religious in feeling, but don't feel drawn to the institutional aspect of religion. Politics are equally remote. They vote—usually Republican. But Mrs. Crick's anti-Ham-and-Eggs campaigning was their only active excursion into the great American sport.

After all, their world is off by itself. 'I'll tell you how I read the paper,' Mr. Crick says, 'that gives it to you. First the lemon market. Then the comic strips. Then the weather. Then the news, if there's time before our ten-o'clock bedtime or unless we play Chinese chequers or something.' That world consists of irrigation and



## THE JOE GREIDER CRICKS

spraying and fumigating and how many lemons the picking ring marks out as big enough for market . . . the sore paw developed by Mike, the wriggly black spaniel . . . whether Martha is getting enough out of her somewhat perfunctory piano lessons to make going on worth while . . . and the burning question of whether the fine money will accumulate to such a point that the balance will be distributed as a Christmas bonus to the youngsters.

Naturally this living in the shadow of a mountain with the sun pouring down day after day and a perennial background of lemon blossoms, which are even prettier than orange blossoms, has its disadvantages too. For instance: the household's relative remoteness may put some handicaps in the way of May's social life as she goes into the phase of adolescence where it is all-important. Right now she is exhausting the possibilities—high school, occasional football games, her honorary knitting society, the Epworth League—and has plenty of energy to spare. Martha's similar problems will be only two years behind. The Cricks will solve that one when it definitely comes up.

Their common sense and ingenuity can be trusted much further than that. In the meantime they refuse to worry because this life they love doesn't have everything you could think of if you started making out specifications for paradise. In fact, they have renounced worry in any large sense, just as they renounce complications that aren't worth while to them personally. Mr. Crick admits that sometimes he can't sleep for fretting about the chance of frost or the state of the lemon market. But it's mere fretting and getting up and taking a cool shower usually fixes it. If it doesn't, he says, it works out like the old story about the elderly darky asked by the white man why Negroes so seldom commit suicide:

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'It's this way,' said the expert, 'white man, he worry and worry and worry and pretty soon he shoot himself. Black man, he worry and worry and worry and pretty soon he just go to sleep.'

### *The CRICKS' Budget*

Here are approximate figures of the principal items that go to make up the Crick family's living costs:

<i>Food</i>	\$780.00
<i>Clothing</i>	270.00
<i>Taxes</i>	150.00
<i>Fuel and light</i>	120.00
<i>Insurance</i> (life, \$222.50; accident, \$31.40; car, \$48.10)	302.00
<i>Transportation</i> (gas, oil, repairs)	240.00
<i>Laundry</i>	91.00
<i>Maintenance of health</i>	180.00
<i>Recreation</i> (new trailer, \$125; movies, \$32)	157.00
<i>Church, community chest</i>	25.00
<i>Newspapers, magazines</i>	25.00
<i>Telephone</i>	60.00
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	100.00
<i>Payment on house and 20 acres</i>	500.00

*The*

## HENRY BRACEYS

*of Warren County, Mississippi*

As for the Braceys, sharecropping in Mississippi, all they have any idea of wanting is a little more to eat.

Lucille, the eldest daughter, still nurses her small boy, although he is better than a year and a half old. Her stepmother avers loudly that she wouldn't have no child that size hanging on her. But Lucille is defiant: 'I ain't going to wean him till I got something fit to feed him.' At the moment—moments too frequent to call for much comment—all there is to eat is some cowpeas and cold hoecake. 'We tries to figure on two meals a day,' Mrs. Bracey says, 'but plenty times they ain't enough but for one.'

Even the census taker had trouble figuring out just how many souls, as ship's papers say, inhabit this board shack on the bottoms north of Vicksburg. Henry Bracey, a sober hard-working tenant, according to the plantation owner, had a wife and family—and the wife died. Estella King, born in this vicinity and living on this same plantation for thirty years or so, had a husband and family—and the husband died. So Estella and Henry got together—married last Christmas—and by now, with a couple of grandchildren, it makes at least sixteen of them in three rooms. Mrs. Bracey herself can't keep them all straight: 'I'll be callin' Haywood and aimin' to get Henry. Then Henry'll say, "My name's not Haywood," and I'll say, "You listen here, you know I means you and you come anyhow."'

Four beds take them all in somehow. Mrs. Bracey

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

brought along her furniture from her former shack, a pitiful little dower including such items as an old gutted victrola and an ice box which has never known a piece of ice. There were no blankets all winter, but gunny sacks helped a little, even when it got down to ten above, with the wind whistling through the wide cracks in the floor. Further protection against the wind is given by newspapers plastered all over the walls with flour paste. All sixteen of them could divide up and crowd somewhere close to the two fireplaces in daytime. In summer the flies and mosquitoes know all too well that the windows are not screened. But by good luck the family have escaped malaria, just as they have missed such diseases of malnutrition as pellagra. When she can spare a quarter for it, Mrs. Bracey buys and doses them with a patent laxative. When she can't she treats ailments with a tea made of dried cornshucks, which she vaguely believes to be good for things.

The Braceys remember wistfully the boom years of 1927 and 1928 when a sharecropper could make something out of his crop. 'Something' was \$100 a year, the best to be hoped for working on half shares, and it sounds like a fortune to them now. In 1939 Henry cleared \$26 in cash. In view of his greatly increased family, the plantation owner is allotting him 10 acres of cotton this year, which might double that figure—a staggering dollar a week. Beyond that, he gets \$15 a month 'furnish' from the plantation during the five winter months. With luck there is some winter cash work for Bracey and the oldest boy—digging ditches, clearing land, or working on the highway or the pipe line. Nothing to count on, but the payment of about 90 cents a day comes in mighty handy when such work is discoverable. And that is that. Mississippi gives no public relief.

Obvious and literal starvation is alleviated by raising



Even the census taker had trouble enumerating the Henry Bracey household, sharecroppers of Warren County, Mississippi. There are sixteen of them in their three-room shack. The State of Mississippi gives no public relief.



The unscreened windows let in flies and mosquitoes, but so far the family has missed getting the malaria common in Mississippi bottom lands.

The Bracey boys work in the fields, get almost no schooling, and scarcely any care. In their flimsy home the rickety back - yard privy has no door.



Lillian does the family washing in a three-legged kettle over an open fire. Washing for sixteen people is a strenuous job even when none of them has many clothes.



The sixteen Braceys have to sleep in four beds. Summer or winter there are no covers. The newspapers pasted on the walls are to keep the wind out.



Henry Bracey 'crops' ten acres of cotton. His landlord owns the mules. (Below) Estella Bracey, her stepdaughter Lucille, and Lucille's son Warren in the 'kitchen' of the shack.



## THE HENRY BRACEYS

things. Right now three red pigs are trying to fatten up enough to be worth killing and salting down next autumn. The five killed last autumn lasted almost into March before the last grey bit of gristle was raked out of the brine. The two cows—'cow-and-a-half,' Mrs. Bracey says scornfully—produce about a gallon of milk a day. Only a cupful apiece if it were drunk, but it goes farther as a richener for hoe cake baked on top of the rickety old stove. Five hens contribute a couple of eggs a day—no question of eating chicken. Several acres of corn planted near the house produce feed for the pigs and hens but seldom leave anything for human beings. The garden patch, religiously planted every spring with as many beets, turnips, beans, onions and such as they can buy seed for, makes summer a relatively fat season. Henry Bracey looked like death itself this spring when a late frost nipped off the sprouted vegetables and the dollar or so necessary for new seeds was absolutely unavailable.

Modern life practically never distracts the Braceys from the sheer problem of eating. Most of the children have never been as far as Vicksburg, six miles away, have never seen a movie, never heard a radio. Lack of shoes usually keeps them from school in winter, and only the children over fourteen know much about reading and writing, their parents nothing at all.

The one new detail in this life their fathers lived before them is the disappearance of midwives, now that the state is cracking down with licenses. Lucille had her baby in a Vicksburg hospital—catching a ride when her time was near—and says they treated her well. 'And,' she says, with unrealized significance, 'you don't get sick afterwards neither like women used to.'

Not an unpleasant spot. A broad, rich plain, with scrubby woods to the west and north—Bracey is permitted to haul his wood from there—and bluff to the east where

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

the big house stands white and shady, with a shiny new car in the driveway. The man in the big house owns ten thousand acres and has about thirty tenant farmers—all coloured because, he says, black and white don't mix.

At the back Bracey is ploughing with one big black mule and one small yellow mule. His wife is wondering how to get essential washing done with the half ounce of remaining bar soap. She knows how to make soap out of wood ashes, but the necessary fat is missing—all fats get eaten thereabouts. The children, black as tar and practically as shiny, are tumbling about on the shaky porch like a Stephen Foster song, playing with a scrawny white cur who never gets anything to eat at all unless he can run down an incautious rabbit or persuade a child to slip him a chunk of something. One wears an old gunny sack with armholes cut in it, much better off than a smaller brother whose miniature black bottom sticks candidly out of a pair of cotton pants that long ago refused to hold together.

If their little bellies ever stopped mildly gnawing, they would think that the world had come to an end. But somehow they stay astonishingly healthy, full of enough devilment for Mrs. Bracey to keep a shingle handy. When the devilment breaks out in all quarters simultaneously, however, Mrs. Bracey gives up. 'If I was to whup 'em all,' she says, 'I'd be wore out. Sometimes I says, "You jes do the best you can—I gotta rest." ' And every Sunday the whole ragged troop marches off to church a couple of miles up the road.

Through it all Bracey tends his cotton and worries about the youngsters' lack of shoes—but not fervently. He never knew anything much different from this hand-to-mouth existence, with the mouth hungry and the hand slow and fumbling. His wife keeps a little snuff tucked into her upper lip, spits into the ashes, swings her red

## THE HENRY BRACEYS

and green glass earrings and explains that maybe catfish might eke out the diet, but all the fishing anybody does round here is when the children wander off somewhere and come back with some little things so small they are not worth the grease to fry them. And hunting? Not when a hunting licence costs \$3. At fifty-two she can still laugh like a reckless girl when the outsider sees nothing whatsoever to suggest laughter.

The privy is a three-sided, almost roofless shed open to the north just beyond the pigpen. The insides are falling out of the stove so the oven can't be used at all, but a man out from Vicksburg to do a welding job on it is about as far out of the realm of their imagining as a sable coat. Both fireplaces smoke badly, but this is useful in mosquito time, of course, to work up a strangling smudge. The solitary mirror is so badly blemished that you can't see your reflection in it. The one efficient thing in the whole shack is a shiny clock, telling the Braceys that another day is coming without another dollar to match.

One wheel is already off the small red toy truck that Lucille somehow managed to buy her unweaned boy last Christmas. The children all squabble over it—he seldom gets his own small black hands on it. But you can hardly blame them. It is the only thing in the place that even remotely resembles a toy.



*The*  
**T. B. WRIGHTS**  
*of Burlington, Vermont*

**T**HE old-fashioned family, as large and comfortable as an easy chair, as stable and solid as the Rock of Gibraltar, still exists, with father at the head of the table, physically and symbolically, and the generations ranged round in a well-ordered unit. No quaint museum piece, either, but a warmly living organism.

One example happens to be lodged in a gabled, red-brick 53-year-old mansion, built like a cross between a ship of the line and a powder magazine, at 237 South Willard Street, Burlington, Vermont, shown in the city directory as the residence of Mr. and Mrs. T. B. Wright. You could find others for the seeking in Spokane or Houston or Indianapolis, quietly carrying on an old American institution in their own determined way.

Under the high medallioned ceilings of the Burlington house seven children grew up. (An eighth and eldest was killed in a traffic accident when only fifteen.) On this particular evening Mr. and Mrs. Wright and five of their children plus an in-law or two are casually gathered in the high square room at the left of the entrance—obviously family headquarters, far more intimately lived in than the formal double parlours across the hall where hangs the portrait of the grey, slight, dapper head of the house. Old-fashioned cannel coal burns fatly in the grate under the carved cherry mantelpiece that lifts gimcrack after gimcrack and shelf after shelf clear to the 13 ft. ceiling. Young Bill, just turned sixteen, crop-haired and tweedy and wearing orange and green

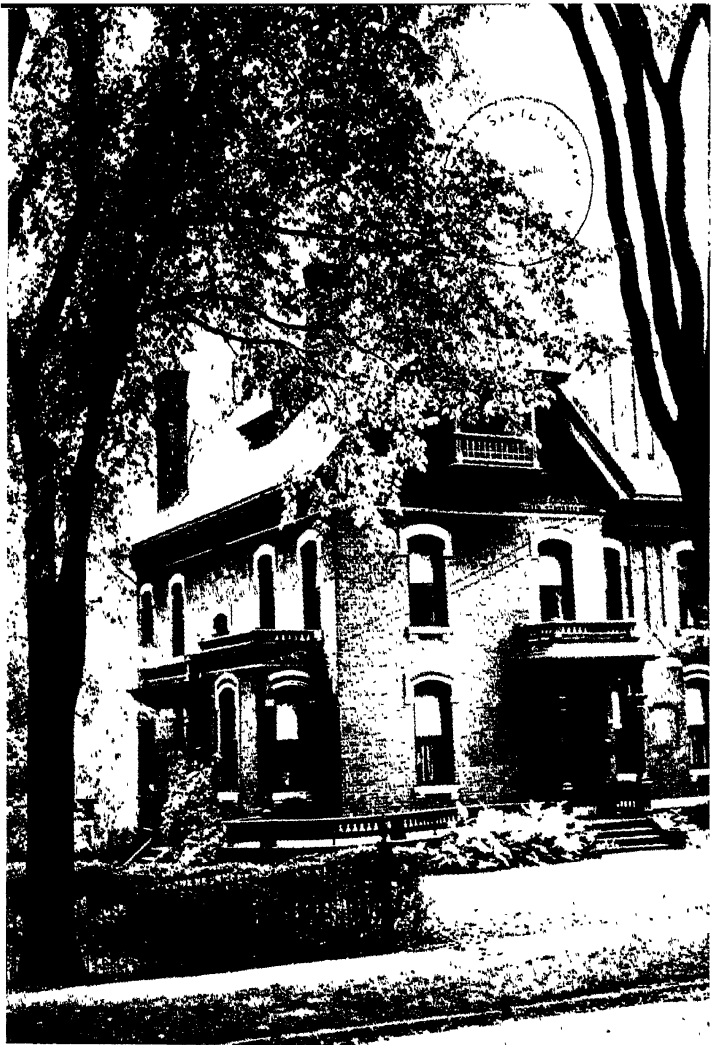
## HOW AMERICA LIVES

socks, is being mildly kidded about what he plans to do in life. The general verdict is that he's booked to be a professional skier. T. B. Wright, jun., otherwise Tommy, is there with his pretty young wife who a year ago presented the Wrights with their fifth grandchild, a little girl named Christine. Phyllis, the eldest daughter, had already contributed two girls and two boys to the third generation.

The little man whose oil portrait hangs over the white painted mantel in that formal room has lived a true American success story. His Scots father, sorter and surveyor in a Burlington lumberyard, died from an injury when the boy was only seven, leaving his keen and resourceful Irish wife penniless, with two children to support. A woman of strong faith, she lost no time in self-pity but took in washing, did all sorts of odd jobs, and sent young Tom to a near-by parochial school. A brash half-pint of a youngster, combining Irish blarney with Scottish shrewdness, he attracted the attention of a visiting professor from St. Joseph's. 'I'd like to have that boy at the college for a couple of years,' he told the principal.

And so young Tom, always a whiz at figures, received two years' free tuition in the commercial department of St. Joseph's College, which got him off to a running start in the world of inventories and credit ratings. A good investment for the church, too. During the World War years, when the Knights of Columbus were campaigning for war-work funds, it was T. B. Wright, president of one of Vermont's largest department stores, doubled up with stomach ulcers that were supposed to be killing him, who raised them \$94,000 in Vermont—almost five times as much as he or anybody else thought could be raised.

After college Tom was crazy to work in a store. He heard about a job in a grocery and went out to get it,



Number 237 South Willard Street, Burlington, Vermont. Seventeen years ago the Wrights paid \$20,000 for this fifteen-room house. The wood-work is cherry and black walnut, the ceilings are thirteen feet high.



The Wright family, of Burlington, Vermont, is sixteen strong. Saturday night supper is New England style—baked beans and brown bread—and rain or shine, the family seldom misses Sunday church. Tom Wright's first job was fifteen hours a day and no pay. To-day he's president of Vermont's largest department store.



insisting on going alone. Turned down and walking shamefacedly home, he met his enterprising mother on her way to find out what had happened. She marched him straight back again and turned her Celtic eloquence loose on the surprised grocer. 'He may not look like a good boy,' she informed him, 'but he is. I want you to give him a job, even if it's without pay.' The grocer sized Tom up again, freckles and all, and agreed to give him a try. From that moment Tom Wright began living up to his favourite motto: 'Believe in yourself, believe in others—and work like hell!'

Especially the part about working like hell. His hours at the grocer's were from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily, except on Saturdays when he worked until midnight. Before long he was earning a salary of \$2 a week for his hard-pressed family. After three hard years, when he had reached \$7 a week and the prospects of more, he decided that a grocery store was not quite the thing after all. He quit. Then followed a period of job hunting. Ignoring the fat \$12-a-week offer from a competitor's grocery store, he finally got what he wanted: a position in Sculley's Dry Goods Store. At \$5 a week.

It was while working at Sculley's that Tom met Alice Casey, a blue-eyed, dark-haired Irish Catholic girl whose father had come over from the old country to work in the iron mines at Mineville, New York, over among the Adirondacks that show up so bravely in the clear winter air across Lake Champlain from Burlington. Tom's mother had been Catholic, too, and at marriage his Scot father became a convert—the kind of convert who delighted the priest with his keen theological discussions.

The circumstances of the young people's first meeting were pretty personal. A stranger in town, Alice had asked a friend where she could do some shopping and had been told about a store where the young man clerk was so

nice that you just liked to sit and talk to him. So Alice went to Sculley's, blushing bought a corset from the nice young man, and found herself heartily agreeing with her friend about him. Four years later they were married, though Alice couldn't cook and couldn't sew and Tom was earning only \$11 a week and would have been pushed to show \$50 in assets. But they moved in for a year with Tom's mother, who taught the young bride about thrift and rolled hems and how to bake those luscious apple pies the Wrights still find indispensable to a corking Sunday dinner, even though they'll leave the roast beef in the maid's hands.

The young couple were extremely happy. After a while they moved to rented rooms. They didn't find money so important, spending carefully and never buying on time. Even when hardest pressed in the early days, with a new baby arriving regularly every two years, the temptation to mortgage their future never occurred to them.

'We had so very little,' Mr. Wright says judiciously, 'that we had to learn not to fret at getting along without practically anything.' They even had a good time doing it. Alice made all the children's clothes and says stoutly they didn't look home-made either. Tom was forever on the prowl for ways to educate himself further in his beloved dry goods business. One day he read an advertisement about a new Dry Goods Encyclopædia which sounded wonderful but was tantalizingly priced at \$8. He sat down and wrote the firm advertising it a letter, telling them candidly that he badly wanted the information in their book but couldn't afford to pay for it. Would they lend it to him for ten days? Miraculously they sent it and his boss, seeing the book lying on the counter, wormed the story out of him, sent the firm a cheque and the encyclopædia became Tom's for good.

The ambitious young clerk's rule of never getting into

## THE T. B. WRIGHTS

debt was confined to the domestic sphere. When his big chance of going into business for himself came he was willing and—what is a great deal more—able to borrow \$32,000 from a local banker on his face alone. That chance came in 1928 when, after a diligent apprenticeship in several local clothing shops, he entered the department store of F. D. Abernethy as treasurer and manager and turned that well-established firm into an exceedingly prosperous business. After the owner's death, in 1934, this store merged with another and he became president of Abernethy Clarkson Wright Inc., now Vermont's leading department store. For the past few years Mr. Wright has been paying himself a salary of \$5,000 a year and when store profits are large he shares in them.

Ask Mr. Wright, sixty-three and still as energetic as ever, when he's going to retire and he says 'Never!' in the tone of a man asked when he plans to shave his head and turn vegetarian. The idea is strictly inconceivable. Until the day that retirement is inescapably necessary things will go on as they always have in the big brick house and the big turreted store.

About the time his prospects began to shine Tom bought the house. To-day it's in mint condition, remarkably shiny and as commodious as the Ark, just as its original owner, a big lumberman who gave his mills *carte blanche* on the job, had it built. Tom had always wanted a big house, just as he wanted a big family. Fifteen rooms without counting the basement laundry. A ping-pong table is now installed there and when he can be coaxed to play, Mr. Wright still outswats the spriest of his daughters. Granite sills for foundation—those brick walls show no more sag than the pyramid of Cheops. Three stories of solid cherry staircase rise up the stair well past the stained glass window, the handrail a cylinder

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

of clear apricot-red timber six inches through. The closets are as big as a New York apartment foyer. The running-water washstand, impressively housed in gleaming oak, still stands in each bedroom.

Mrs. Wright particularly values the elaborate original chandeliers, dripping with crystal pendants, that light all ground-floor rooms with the *éclat* of a banquet hall. She tells with relish of the lady down the street who had hers taken out when people began to consider them out of date. When suddenly they became important collectors' items, she rushed frantically to her attic, only to find that the children had long since removed and lost all the crystals. Even with the labour-saving help of electricity—refrigerator, mixer, irons, vacuum cleaner—a hard-working French-Canadian maid at \$8 a week and a weekly cleaning woman at \$3, Mrs. Wright feels that a smaller and newer house would be more practical now that the children are grown. It takes an incalculable amount of elbow grease to keep all the bric-à-brac dusted, the brass gleaming and that satiny shine on the oak panels in the dining room. But Tom still values that house as much as he valued it when he was willing to pay \$20,000 spot cash for it seventeen years ago. Characteristically, however, he has seen to it that the establishment is not too heavy a drain on the family resources, by converting the big stable that occupied the rear of the 75 × 250 lot into a couple of neat apartments that rent very readily.

In the same way the family camp seven miles from town, with five hundred feet of white sand beach on Lake Champlain, is kept from being an extravagance. It becomes a kind of patriarchal village in summer, Mr. and Mrs. Wright, Alice and Grace—the two daughters who still live at home—and Bill in one cottage, Mr. and Mrs. Tommy in another, Phyllis and her brood in the third.

## THE T. B. WRIGHTS

The business members drive in to their offices every morning. (Mr. Wright's only vacations are short motor trips.) The four other cottages are rented to families carefully selected for congeniality as well as ability to pay a good enough rental to give the Wrights their camp free. With improvements and all the place cost a good \$16,000. But it is as sound an asset as an investor could hope for.

This family is as much of a unit as the crew of a big field gun. Tommy, jun., is merchandizing manager of the department store and is being trained to take his father's place at the remote time when it becomes necessary. Grace, the slender, brown-haired daughter, handles much of the store's advertising. Alice, the lively, trim daughter with darker hair, acts as office manager. All food supplies are bought from the grocery store run by Lionel Leary, Phyllis's husband. Both Tom and Phyllis live in rented houses just down the street. Gertrude and Kathryn, both married and now living in other cities, often join the rest of the family at camp.

In the middle of them all sits Mr. Wright himself looking rather like a blander version of Thomas W. Lamont. 'The centre of the universe,' one daughter calls him, and that about expresses the way they all feel.

Mrs. Wright's personality also helps explain the family solidarity. Grey, slight, and slender, she explains that she never went in for club work or large-scale entertaining by saying 'I guess I'm just all mother'. Outside activity she always left to her energetic and civic-minded husband. In the last few years—she is now sixty-two—high blood pressure and frequent headaches have limited the wholesale canning and preserving that used to go on each summer in the large basement kitchen. But she stills puts up many a jar of jam or jelly, many a crock of the family favourite grape juice. Christmas is her favourite

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

day of the year, when the big coal stove in the basement kitchen is fired up to supplement the modern gas range in the pantry and, with the whole family reunited, eighteen people sit down to attack turkey and fixings.

Just the same she isn't at all sure she would like her married daughters to bear eight children as she did. Rearing them was a memorable emotional, financial, and physical ordeal. But Tom wanted them. Phyllis, with her four, he says, has done 'best of all'. And, says Mrs. Wright with the glow of Christmas lasting her through the rest of the year:

'It's wonderful now they've all grown up and we can just sit back and enjoy them.'

Their present income of \$5,000 a year floats the Wrights buoyantly down channels worn smooth by long contentment. Barring premiums on Mr. Wright's \$35,000 life insurance, they save little. But between buying food supplies from son-in-law's store and practically everything else but coal and hardware and finger-waves at Abernethy Clarkson Wright—naturally with fat family discounts at both places—the Wrights' consumer's dollar goes a lot farther than yours and mine. Mr. Wright's head for figures supplies budget information here. Mrs. Wright does the buying but practically never sees the accounts rendered. Her husband just pays them without comment. Forty-odd years of mutual experience have made agreement in such matters between the pair absolutely automatic—all the more because both came from environments where cash was always scarce and thrift the first condition of existence.

Like the Wright's house, the Wright car was bought with a shrewd eye to maximum value per dollar. The present big Cadillac sedan cost around \$1,900 cash new four years ago. In a year or two it will probably be traded—the balance spot cash again—for another of the long

## THE T. B. WRIGHTS

series of Cadillacs the Wrights have been owning since their first in 1914. In four years this car has done 18,000 miles, being used largely to take Mr. Wright to and from work and home for lunch, purring and gleaming along as befits so dignified a merchant.

On top of daughter Alice's own Ford is a rack for skis—a device as important to a car belonging to that family as the steering gear itself. Some of the nation's better skiing country lies in the mountains back of Burlington, as local merchants and railroads are happily aware, and the young Wrights are all avid skiers. Grace broke a leg at it this last winter but is nothing daunted, nor has becoming the mother of four noticeably cramped Phyllis's style. For years everybody has been expecting young Bill to break every bone in his body careering over Mt. Mansfield's snowy slopes. But having been practically weaned on skis, he has so far had a charmed and brilliantly dashing career. Tom, jun., occasionally goes out to the camp for ice-boating on the frozen lake. Skiing has come in since Mr. Wright's time, but he was quite a skater as a boy when work and night school let up enough to give him half a chance.

Getting educated has been a far simpler process for the Wright children than for their father. Alice and the two married sisters who have left Burlington graduated from the University of Vermont with its pleasant campus right at their doorstep, Grace from Burlington's Trinity College, a Catholic women's school, Phyllis from the local Mount St. Mary Academy. Their father insisted that all the girls should take general arts courses to give them the broad cultural background that, unlike business training, could be got nowhere else.

For Tommy that principle was somewhat relaxed—the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce at the University of Pennsylvania was his pick. His mother

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

was anxious to get him away from home anyway—elder sisters were getting far too used to bossing younger brother around. Young Bill is now in his second year, working well and playing guard in season on a pickup football team at Burlington's Cathedral High. The problem of whether he is to follow his brother and sisters into the store is still unsettled. Bill shrugs his chunky shoulders about the whole problem and Mr. Wright is just letting it ride as he did with the others. But Mrs. Wright day-dreams a bit about having a lawyer or doctor in the family and says, with some feeling, that there are already plenty of Wrights in that store.

Plenty of Wrights but very definitely only one who is boss hornet among the pneumatic tubes and compact, enticing counters. No big shot's office for him, however, just a small plain room with a big roll-top desk, a reproduction of a Gilbert Stuart Washington over his head and over the door a small photograph of the old-timer who founded the business back in 1847, the style of whiskers recalling that Brigham Young was a Vermonter too.

If Burlington is a progressive town, much of it is due to T. B. Wright's abounding energy and earnest devotion to the city where he was born. He was so set on rearing his own family there that he once turned down an offer which he was morally certain would yield 'a hundred dollars to every dollar I was earning at the time', because it would have obliged him to move, lock, stock, and barrel, to Providence, Rhode Island. He helped organize both the Burlington and the Vermont chambers of commerce and is a devout believer—as some of his more shrinking fellow Vermonters are not—in the long-run wisdom of selling Vermont to the nation as a winter and summer playground.

Nowadays, while carefully running the store, he also



## THE T. B. WRIGHTS

finds time to be president of the St. Vincent de Paul Society (the Catholic men's charitable organization), chairman of the board of lay directors of St. Michael's College (a Catholic school for poor boys), president of the Vermont branch of the American Retail Federation, and the non-political member of the Vermont state milk control board representing consumers' interests. As he takes his regular after-lunch stroll, cigar in hand and overcoat neatly buttoned, all Church Street recognizes him as as much of a town fixture as the wail of the Rutland Railroad's whistles. That stroll is about all the exercise he ever gets, but it apparently keeps him fit as a fiddle.

Mr. and Mrs. Wright have never succumbed to bridge fever. His card-playing consists of an occasional session of high-low-jack with a number of long-standing cronies at the Knights of Columbus rooms. Radio gets a big play, however, with three different sets in the house and a family taste for good swing so strong that even Mr. Wright is sometimes inspired to leap up and do a little rug-cutting. Parents and Bill go to the movies together at least twice a week. Mrs. Wright's one stipulation on pictures is that there shall be no fighting on the screen—if, for lack of warning, she does run into fighting scenes she shuts her eyes tight until Bill assures her it's all over. The children in general have a great fancy for Mae West and their mother for Bette Davis, on whom Mr. Wright's opinion is equally strong the other way. He plays no favourites, figuring two out of three movies a waste of time, but keeping right on trying for the third.

Back when all the children were taking music lessons, the Wrights had a hard-trying family orchestra, including piano, violin, and saxophone, and a good deal of lusty community singing. But music didn't seem to take permanently. Except for the skiing mania, Mrs. Wright's passion for embroidery is the only real hobby in the house.

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

She is shyly proud of the job she did in rehabilitating and covering with lusciously coloured gros point a little antique stool which had been knocking about the store for years, used by the salesgirls to stand on while reaching for high shelves. Lots of reading goes on. The open book-case downstairs, cheek by jowl with the old lumberman's glass-enclosed jobs, blossoms with the gay jackets of contemporary best sellers from Lin Yutang to *Of Mice and Men*, and among them the family subscribe to a characteristic selection of magazines—*Business*, *House and Garden*, the *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Good Housekeeping*, the *Reader's Digest*, *Time*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, and *Mademoiselle*, for samples.

Few houses are simultaneously so alive in the present and so full of the past. Even now, if his daughters get home from the store before he does, there is a breath right out of the old days in the words 'Papa is coming' as the Cadillac eases silkily up the drive to disgorge a small man with a highly respectable grey hat. He himself says, not without a twinkle, 'There's never been but one voice in this household—and that's mine.' Even now his writs carry enough authority to make it seem natural when he reminds a grown and self-supporting daughter that since she was out late last night she had better stay at home to-night.

The family has grown up but not away. This is true even of the two absent married daughters, who are doing well, too. Gertrude was married two years ago to a Socony-Vacuum engineer, and now lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Kathryn, with a flair for the family line, is employment manager of the big Abraham and Strauss department store in Brooklyn. Mrs. Wright has every justification for looking around in her gentle way as the evening wears on and saying, 'They say there's always a black sheep in every large family. Goodness knows

## THE T. B. WRIGHTS

this is a large family, but I don't know just where we'd look to find a black sheep.'

The president of Abernethy Clarkson Wright, whose children used to assail him every morning for romping and story-telling and a ride on his peculiarly bounce-worthy knee as eye-openers, nods complete agreement with this statement.

### *The WRIGHTS' Budget*

Here are the principal items that go to make up the Wright family's yearly living costs:

<i>Food</i>	\$800·00
<i>Clothing</i>	800·00
<i>Furniture (replacement)</i>	200·00
<i>Taxes</i>	600·00
<i>Fuel and light</i>	400·00
<i>Insurance</i>	440·00
<i>Transportation</i>	315·00
<i>Household help, laundry</i>	455·00
<i>Maintenance of health</i>	150·00
<i>Church</i>	250·00
<i>Telephone</i>	50·00
<i>Newspapers, magazines</i>	40·00
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	500·00
	<hr/>
	\$5,000·00



*The*  
**CHARLES GILLESPIES**

*of Clifftop, West Virginia*

**A**s coal-mining camps go, Clifftop, West Virginia, strung along a narrow slit of mountain valley about four miles from the main highway, is by no means the grimmest. The woods are close to the backyards and the employees are largely homogeneous, grave-voiced native Americans, without the foreign-born's unintentional dramatization of poverty. But the houses are a half-effaced freight-car red and nobody has had much work for years. And years.

So the 'front room' that Charles and Mittie Gillespie jealously maintain in their half of a company house is an absolute spiritual necessity. Gillespie gets one regular day's work a week operating the little locomotive on the narrow-gauge line down to the Chesapeake and Ohio siding five miles away. Nobody gets more—the mine runs only one day a week. Between that regular day and supplementary jobs the company assigns him to work off accumulating charges at the company store, he earned close to \$800 last year—for self and wife and six children still at home (an epileptic daughter is in a state institution, another daughter has a job away from home) to live on.

Times are bad—nobody denies it. But, no matter how bad, the red plush upholstery in the front room will be taboo, so it won't wear shabby, and the china ornaments will get dusted and the flowery rug, still splinter-new, duly swept. Since the chimney became unsafe to use, the fireplace has been papered over. But in conspicuous dignity above its mantel hangs Mr. Gillespie's huge

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

Masonic emblem, neatly framed like seventeen-year-old Helen's grade-school diploma hanging near by. Mittie frets a little because they still owe most of the price of that overstuffed grandeur. But without it . . . after all, that room is dedicated to self-respect. And the rest of the little house is so bare and bleak with its rigid minimum of beds and chairs and scratched linoleum.

On the same never-say-die principle, Gillespie keeps the front yard shrubbery neatly trimmed. Nobody is envious because Helen, now a high-school junior, gets nail lacquer and thriftily pretty clothes from the elder sister who works as a housemaid for \$5 a week in Charleston. As the only one who has much contact with the outside world, Helen must put up a good front for the family. Plump, brisk, attractive, she is studying stenography and typing, playing in the school band, and nursing ambitions as an amateur popular-song singer, with her family rooting loyally for her in the background. Mrs. Gillespie makes all the other children's clothes on an ancient sewing machine that used to belong to her mother, and she hasn't had a new coat herself in ten years. But that's a mere detail to Mittie Gillespie. She lives for and believes in her family, bracing them all with the sparkle in her eye and the affectionate warmth of her voice. 'Mom is wonderful,' her children say admiringly; 'nothing can get her down.' And to see her, solid, chin up, genially keeping her small fry together as a clean and self-respecting family with so little money and so much mother wit, is to agree that nothing can.

Mittie has known a good deal about coal mines ever since she was born right there in Clifftop, where her father, a coal digger, was killed in an accident in the mines. When she was just fourteen and 'awful pretty' too, according to her husband, she eloped with Gillespie, whom she had met at the lumber-camp church, from



The Charles Gillespies, of Clifftop, Fayette County, West Virginia, belong to the 27 per cent of U.S. families who have incomes between \$500 and \$1,000 a year. They can count on \$800, but there are eight of them to feed, clothe, and house.

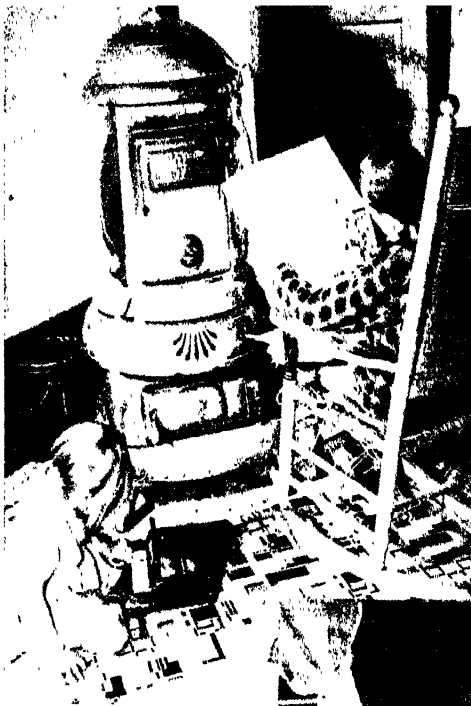


The two-family house in which the Gillespies live costs only \$8.26 a month. Mr. Gillespie and Howard hunt rabbits and squirrels for a 'mess of meat', but most of the time the family relies on 'garden sass' from the half-acre plot.





Ten cents a person a day is the Gillespie budget for food. Pretty and 17, Helen Gillespie is ambitious to land a job as secretary. Her father works as locomotive engineer on a mine railroad that operates only one day a week.



Giving up the Charleston Gazette subscription was the toughest economy of all. The subscription has now been renewed. Here Charles, 21, crippled by infantile paralysis, reads the news while Alice, 6, plays on the floor.

Mittie Gillespie cooks, cans, washes clothes and dishes, and makes her children's clothes. The electric washer is a great help, but they owe \$72 on it.



## THE CHARLES GILLESPIES

the lumberjacks' boarding-house her mother was running at near-by Landisburg. He had come straight off his father's farm to work for the same company that now employs him. When this company changed over from lumber to coal and moved to Clifftop, he brought Mittie back to her birthplace—and coal mines again. But she'd do it all over again in a minute, she says. Why not? she adds.

Lean hill-Scotsmen like Gillespie are also hard to lick. 'I sure wish now I'd never left the farm,' he says. 'You never had to worry then where your next meal was coming from.' But, now that the bottom land that grew corn so richly and the way the old man worked his boys to death are both far in the past, he can look his situation pretty coolly in the eye. Where could he go if he gave in to the temptation to pull up stakes? As it is, if the war or something else ever gives the coal market an upward turn again, he has a job that pays \$6 to \$9 a day, and three days a week would put him close to the \$1,500 a year which is all he asks of the world. A piece of a job and a good roof over the head are better than nothing—and, if he were unemployed, a family that size would rate only \$30 a month from West Virginia relief. 'Poor folks shouldn't expect much,' he says, 'but enough to live on—yes, sir.'

If \$800 a year were enough for eight people to live on they would manage it. Company pay is all absorbed in charges—the Gillespies have almost forgotten what cash looks like—but it goes farther that way. Theoretically employees are not supposed to run up credit at the company store past \$35 but, since Gillespie is such an old timer, he is allowed to go in a little deeper and work it off with the odd jobs in the mine. Company store prices compare favourably with those of the stores in town and the Gillespies figure food averages about \$35 a month.

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

Company coal for the big base-burner in the back room and the cookstove works out about \$3 a ton. Doctor and hospital, whenever needed, are taken care of at \$3 a month, union dues at \$1, payments on a burial fund at 78 cents. The house costs only \$8.26 a month—and a good house, too, Gillespie makes it clear, built of clean yellow poplar and never a sag in it after fifty years, with five rooms and running mountain water and a bathroom.

Thirty-two years of working for the Babcock Coal and Coke Company have left Gillespie a lot of such pride in his job, community, and employer. The company are a good lot, he insists, and give the boys a break whenever they can. And the coal they mine is the best doggone steam coal that ever went into a locomotive firebox, leaving no more clinker than firewood.

Their big garden every spring—close to half an acre—is a life-saver. Tomatoes, potatoes, beans, onions, and the whole seed catalogue to boot, with 150 cans of it put up for winter, plus a few small but neatly pruned fruit trees. Even so the end of winter usually finds them down to dried beans and oatmeal and maybe an egg now and again. 'We don't see a mess of meat once a month,' Mrs. Gillespie says with firm security. When they do it's usually a couple of rabbits or squirrels brought back triumphantly from a hunting expedition by Gillespie and fourteen-year-old Howard, whose accuracy with both figures and the family shotgun is the family pride.

Mittie bakes her own bread—tastes better, Gillespie says, and then you wouldn't get far with store-bought bread for a family this size. She can stretch a pound of coffee over a whole week. Although the family is eligible, distribution of federal surplus commodities has so far provided little. Fluid milk for the children is naturally out of the question. But somehow they stay

## THE CHARLES GILLESPIES

pretty healthy, barring colds, and somehow daddy keeps them in shoes for school down at the other end of the camp. There is always a scrap of something for the big tom cat, who keeps the house clear of the big black rats that infest Clifftop, and for the wiggly coon dog pup who is the cat's anomalous playmate. Gillespie says the cat is the best of alarm clocks, always jumping on the bed and licking his face as soon as it's good and light.

Things may be better this year, if the company can get foreign bottoms to ship the coal that wartime Europe has already ordered. In spite of the fact that he considers himself fundamentally a Republican, Gillespie has many kind words for Roosevelt. If the NRA had gone on and 'if they'd let Mr. Roosevelt do what he wanted to, lots of people would be working steady,' he says confidently. But the Gillespies draw no bitter conclusions from their predicament. The only thing that really ever 'got' Gillespie was when for a while he had to stop taking the *Charleston Gazette* because the necessary \$6 a year was out of the question. He admits that he did 'miss it terrible'.

Not that it doesn't trouble Mittie to have those worn places in the linoleum and those cracks in the wallboard and the ceiling and that \$72 still due on the electric washing machine that, as successor to one that lasted fourteen years, helps do eight people's laundry every week. But her strong arms keep moving and the children keep growing and, if the world would only make just a little more sense, everything would be fine.



*The*  
**NELS HANDEVIDTS**  
*of Martin County, Minnesota*

THE soil is black and rich and deep in Martin County, Minnesota, near the Iowa line. Whether or not Mr. and Mrs. Nels Handevidt, who own and farm two hundred acres of it, are rich to match is a matter of definition. They may clear \$1,000 cash in a good year—barely a living wage for a city family of five. But in standard of living—not to mention contentment—the world they inhabit is utterly different from that of pay envelopes and five-o'clock whistles. They take what they want from the machine age and hang on to what always made sense in man's relation to the land. So they get the best of both worlds, all of it rooted deep as the soil itself in the fertility of a notably fertile region.

Standing in Nels Handevidt's barnyard is a team of chunky bay draught horses, cheek by jowl with a Ford truck and a Farmwell tractor. Just beyond them, wires and new poles testify that a Rural Electrification project has just got current into the Handevidt homestead. Mr. Handevidt fondly contemplates the metre's disc revolving as it busily adds up the watts, and says with pride that he reckons the new electric refrigerator must have just started up. In winter in these parts, the snow may drift twenty feet high across the road. But a powerful modern snowplough gets through, twice a day if necessary. This evening Mrs. Handevidt and her second daughter will get together for a good spell of fine stitching on the old-time patchwork quilt they will show at the county fair next autumn—working on it by electric light.

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

These Handevichts are as husky and fair and wholesomely clean to look upon as you would expect from Nels's Danish- and Anna's German-born forebears. Long-legged and easy-moving, wedge-shouldered and big-handed, still exuding gentle power at the age of fifty-one, Nels has passed on his blue eyes and rosy translucent skin to both his boys. That same family complexion, under a row of precise little curls, makes Margarieth, the just-married younger daughter, resemble a smiling little portrait by Hans Holbein. Kathryn, her elder sister, has been married to a farmer for three years and lives twelve miles away. The serenely successful way in which Mrs. Handevicht and her daughters wear the crispest of colourful house dresses would strike envy into all the ten best-dressed women in the world rolled into one.

All four Handevicht children have gone to high school. Although, like Nels, Mrs. Handevicht got no more education than the local grade school afforded, her speech, as she chats about household concerns, could give points in coherence and correctness to many a college instructor with a Ph.D. to his name. The whole lot would inspire pride equally in a teacher, a doctor, a county agent, a preacher, or a set of grandparents.

The old folks have all 'passed on' now. Mrs. Handevicht's parents brought her to Minnesota from an Illinois farm when she was three. Nels was born within two miles of his present farm, but his father and mother had come out to Minnesota, along with so many other Scandinavians not long before. For eleven years, until Anna's mother died, the young married couple lived with her, in the same house where they had exchanged vows at their formal Lutheran wedding. But all the while Nels was working on his new-bought acres, getting a living for his wife and babies, as well as making payments on the purchase price of \$18,000, erecting buildings, designing



The Handevids farm 200 acres of Martin County, Minnesota. Mr. Handevidt's corn crop runs to 3,000 bushels.



The German - Lutheran church where Anna Handevidt was married 30 years ago, and Margarieth in 1940.

A rural electrification project has made the winter evenings pleasanter and lessened labour for Mrs. Handevidt. No more lamp chimneys to wipe and wicks to trim.



Margarieth's  
bridal party  
was a great  
event. Two  
hundred neigh-  
bours attended.  
Here the wed-  
ding group is  
seen on the  
steps of the  
church pic-  
tured overleaf.



The family likes to  
eat out of doors.  
The Handevdt food  
bill is only \$5.00 a  
week, but the farm  
supplies most of the  
larder.

## THE NELS HANDEVIDTS

his own house and getting it built, putting the fields in optimum shape, preparing everything for present impressive efficiency as a place to live in and on.

It was just land when he took over. Now a trim group of farm buildings, in which even the concrete hog-house is better shelter than many human beings have, clusters round the eight-roomed, white-clapboard house that cost some \$5,000 to build back in 1925. No architect was needed for this straightforward, two-storey job. The Handevids knew what they wanted, even to the electric wiring that, in 1925, was only a symbol of their confidence in eventualities. The household water supply still arrives via hand-pump in the kitchen sink. But the house boasts a bathroom, off the kitchen, that would make the average old-time farmwife stare and envy. Now that the power is handy, an electric pump would make hot-and-cold running water practicable. But just as it stands, the farm is a smooth-running plant and eminently livable. Land included, the total investment must easily run to \$30,000, all taken out of the soil by dint of twenty years of hard, intelligent work.

Although thrifty as a Poor Richard proverb, the Handevids do not save cash, and have no great use for budgets. Cars and equipment are bought when they can be paid for, and paid for when bought. Any surplus goes to improve the farm further—a maximum productivity of what the world eats and wears strikes them as the best kind of old-age security. Nels and Anna hope eventually to spend winters in California, as Nels's parents did, with Harold, now eighteen, and Lewis, fifteen, carrying on in father's large and capable shoes. One of these times they will get into the car and go and prospect California, to check up on the reports of friends and relatives already there. Given a fair break in agricultural conditions, that is no idle dream—the boys show

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

ample signs of making first-class farmers. And the farm is probably up to the job. Last year sixty of its acres produced 3,000 bushels of corn—a so-so crop for that region—plus a lot of oats, flax, and barley and some sorghum for fodder. Besides that, Nels has finished payments on a partly inherited 120-acre farm of fair productivity down the road, rented on shares to the same steady-going tenant for the past nine years.

As a junior in Sherburne high school five miles away, young Lewis is cannily taking bookkeeping—farmers need careful accounting as much as businessmen do. But even an accountant would go crazy finding out just what the ingredients of living cost this semi-self-sustaining household. Fuel, for instance—the hot-air heating system needs only \$60 worth of coal annually to battle the formidable Minnesota winter, because much of the time it burns corncobs and wood produced on the place.

Food is equally confusing. The Handevichts keep 400 hens, making a cash crop of eggs and poultry at the same time that they eat all the eggs and poultry they want themselves. They milk six cows, selling a good deal of cream and feeding the skim milk to the stock which they later eat in the shape of pork chops and roasts, in addition to supplying themselves with lashings of whole milk, cream, and butter. Five dollars cash a week for staples—beyond that practically all their meat, potatoes, vegetables, and a good deal of fruit comes from their own land. Last year they put up 577 quarts of fruit, 160 quarts of vegetables, 146 quarts of poultry and meat, 221 glasses of jelly. Right there is a lot of starvation insurance and nobody knows precisely what it costs.

The refrigerating-locker system has put them even closer to being self-sustaining the year round. This arrangement, spreading farther every year in more

## THE NELS HANDEVIDTS

prosperous farm sections, stores meat, fruit, and vegetables of the farmers' own providing in individual quick-freezing lockers that keep them indefinitely to thaw out fresh when wanted, in as small portions as you please. Before the lockers came the Handevидts had to sell their fat steers to packers and buy them back as fresh beef, at considerable cash expense. Now they see their own cattle stored away at practically no cash expense and eat them at leisure. Regardless of season, Mr. Handevидt points out with delight, they can have their own fat, red, sun-ripened strawberries miraculously preserved from June to January, just as good as when they came off the plant. The locker costs only \$10 a year and the handling charge on meat is a mere one cent a pound. Young Lewis, driving back from high school five days a week, can always stop at the locker plant and pick up whatever meat or vegetables his mother wants for supper.

Work clothes and dress clothes for the family, bought in local shopping centres like Fairmont, the busy county seat, may come to \$400 a year. Buying them is a family project with the consensus of opinion guiding each investment. Only wash dresses and aprons are made at home. The telephone is only \$15 a year. Electricity the first month was \$4.65, covering lights, refrigerator, toaster, and waffle iron. As they add electrical devices, of course—a vacuum cleaner to cope with summer dust, possibly an electric washer, and an electric pump to supply running water—the bill will mount. But the whole family is curiously proud of that prospect. The old petrol lamps, petrol-powered washer, and petrol iron did all right. But the way those floodlights in the barnyard take the grief out of the after-supper chores is an extremely impressive lesson in how dynamos and wires can make life handier and handier.

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

Modern convenience passes them by only in medical care. Local doctors are competent enough. But they charge 50 cents a mile on country calls. When one call comes to \$15 and your cash income is only \$1,000 a year 'you just can't afford to get sick', says Margarieth. Twice in the past twelve years serious illness for Mrs. Handevidt has sent them way back financially. Hospital insurance is not available thereabouts. But year in and year out great stamina, clean air, hard exercise, and a brilliantly healthy diet keep the Handevidts' annual medical expenses down close to \$50.

Although deposed from the washing and lighting jobs petrol still does the farm's heavy hauling, transports the youngsters to and from high school, and saves shopping time. Two cars—a 1937 Chevrolet sedan and a 1936 Chevrolet coupé, due to be exchanged after six years, just to make sure of maximum use on the investment. Cars also make movies easily available in at least three neighbouring towns. But the Handevidts are not great moviegoers—breakfast at 5 a.m. in summer and 6.30 a.m. in winter makes late hours inadvisable the night before.

They also pay relatively little attention to the entertainment aspect of the shiny new radio in the dining room. Farm-and-home programmes and news broadcasts get most of the play. Their only newspapers are local—the *Jackson Pilot*, the *Fairmont Sentinel*, the *Sherburne Advance-Standard*, for which last Margarieth writes the local correspondence from the neighbourhood. Minneapolis or Chicago papers would arrive only a day late. But they aren't that interested. They always vote in all elections and are nominally Democrats, but the fervour of their partisanship is best brought out by Mrs. Handevidt's outspoken conviction that all political parties are a civic mistake and you should vote strictly on each individual candidate's merits.

## THE NELS HANDEVIDTS

Even their recreation is largely self-sustaining. Sunday picnic drives to one of the lakes that abound in this section of Minnesota, church festivals and sociables. Ping-pong, Chinese chequers, old-fashioned chequers, horseshoe pitching in the yard on summer evenings. Or an hour or two of singing after supper, with Harold working away on his guitar, and Lewis leading the ensemble with the excellent voice that makes him prominent in high-school glee club.

That kind of home helps immunize the young folks against city fever. All four young Handevvidts are more or less willingly destined to the same country life that their parents and grandparents led before them. Kathryn is already a full-fledged brisk young farmwife, with an infant son to keep her extra busy. Margarieth is newly-wed to the clean-cut brown-eyed farmer lad who's been around pretty consistently ever since her junior year in high school. Both Handevvidt boys are heart and soul in the job of making those fat black acres produce more and more and more per acre. Lewis has never shown any signs of wanting to be anything but a farmer. Harold did have a period of yearning after aviation, and his success in high-school athletics, where he did mighty well in both hockey and track, stirred up ambition to be an athletic coach. But the peculiar challenge of farm problems is making more and more impression on him.

Margarieth once worked a couple of years clerking in a Sherburne variety store—ten miles in and out—and liked it. 'You meet so many people in that kind of job,' she says and admits she might very well have gone on with it. But she was needed at home, as her mother before her had been needed in Grandmother Miller's home, and her undoubted talents in the housekeeping line have developed to a high pitch. As for people, Margarieth will hardly lack friends in any environment.

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

At her wedding last June—complete with white satin, roses, and four attendants including sister Kay—two hundred neighbours crowded into the pews. That is a tremendous turnout for a part of the country where mailboxes are sometimes miles apart. Neither Margarieth nor Harold apparently felt frustrated by being dedicated by circumstances to the farm. After all, they were raised in this setting of hard work and slow growth, and they have seen its fruits in soul-satisfying, deep-rooted contentment. Knowing that their parents and their grandparents found it good, the Handevidt sons and daughters have every respect for this hardy, full, and thrifty life.

Another reason for the staying power of these particular young folks may be the stimulating effect of the 4-H Club movement, in which Margarieth, Harold, and Lewis have all participated with great enthusiasm, along with 45,000 other young Minnesota farmfolks. Four-H stands for Health, Heart, Head, and Hands. Its multitudinous groups expertly foster competitions among youngsters in raising fat stock, beautifying home surroundings, canning, physical fitness, public service—a whole range of activities in which better knowledge enriches farming as a way of life.

The Handevidt youngsters are outstanding achievers in 4-H. In 1939 at the county fair Harold and Lewis won first and second with their baby beeves, fed scientifically to optimum size and weight and shown with hoofs burnished, hides scoured and marcelled, and everything but pink ribbon bows on the carefully curled tassels of their tails. Mr. Handevidt, who provided the raw material, takes some credit for this fact: 'You can't just take any old scrub and feed him up,' he says. Lewis also won second in the hog-feeding contest. Margarieth took first in meal planning and room furnishing, in pineapple, spinach, and pear canning, and in cake baking,



## THE NELS HANDEVIDTS

where, in glorious fact, she won five years in a row. Not content with this, she branched out last year into a home beautification project that involved adding elaborate flower beds to the already handsome surroundings of the Handevidt homestead.

But there is much more to 4-H than the mere zest of competition. Lewis and Harold have learned invaluable lessons in the importance of good breeds and scientific feeding to stock raising. Margarieth's resultant skill in dietetics and cooking and decorating made her not only an invaluable assistant to her mother in running a top-notch household but also, when the time came, a remarkably eligible wife for an earnest young farmer. No wonder that Mr. and Mrs. Handevidt feel that 4-H is about the best thing that ever happened. They are both fond and proud of their children, as the abundance of photographs about the house clearly shows.

Religion also plays a huge part in holding the Handevidts together on the land that feeds them, making a mutually responsible group in which, because all agree in the same traditions of behaviour, punishment was hardly known—spanking not at all—and whatever seemed good to parental authority had the force more of organic law than of arbitrary will. A religious motto—'Christ is the head of this house'—hangs in each room with the same symbolic rightness as the elaborately ornamented marriage certificate over the head of the parents' bed. Nels and Anna first met at a church picnic and matured their acquaintance at prayer meetings. When the family are singing together of evenings, hymns come first and the cowboy songs they all like distinctly second—not out of formal piety but because the old hymn tunes are closest to their normal feelings.

Three Sundays a month, in their spick-and-span best, they all go to church and Sunday school at the little

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

German Lutheran church just over the line in Jackson County. The fourth Sunday is skipped because the services are then held in German—‘I can still understand a little of it,’ Mrs. Handevidt says, ‘but it means very little to me now and nothing at all to any of the others.’ Margarieth teaches a Sunday-school class regularly, Lewis as a substitute on occasion. And none of them dances because, as good Lutherans, Mr. and Mrs. Handevidt are uncomfortable about round dancing of any sort. The Virginia reel is all right—no waist-clasping there—as are the old-time pioneers’ singing-and-stepping games like Happy Is the Miller and Skip to My Lou that often make the Handevidts’ sitting-room floor buckle and bounce. But the Handevidt youngsters have left the fox trot and all its cousins out of their lives without feeling deprived, without explicit orders to do so, just because they have a spontaneous feeling for the first six words of the Fifth Commandment.

That natural harmony pervades everything about the place. The Handevidts planted their hedges and ornamental spruces when they built the house, and fifteen years later the shrubbery justifies that foresight. ‘Lots of them would have done it little by little,’ Mr. Handevidt says, ‘but I thought it made more sense to do it all early so it would grow in time for us all to enjoy it.’ He looks around his turfy barnyard, dry as a bone underfoot when the horses are fetlock-deep in mud in his neighbours’ barnyards, and murmurs in all sincerity about how much work the place needs—whereas everything is actually as shipshape as the deck of a cruiser cleared for action. In the same vein Mrs. Handevidt apologizes for the mess the house is in—right in the middle of autumn cleaning—when the only detail visibly askew is the fact that the vine usually trained around the inside of the dining room window has been taken down in order

## THE NELS HANDEVIDTS

to get the clean curtains up. Inside and out everything is as clear and neat as one of her prized patchwork quilts.

Neat, but not martinet style. Otherwise the Handevichts would hardly be so fond of animals, which are too difficult to fit into regimentation. The place swarms with animals—not only the horses, cows, hens, geese, ducks, steers, large hogs, and little pigs that help the Handevichts to a living, but others that just sort of belong to the family. Such as the white billygoat, with no particular job except to stalk disdainfully among the young steers. And Barney, the youngsters' Shetland pony, now twenty years old but still remembering how to play dead and count up his age with his off front hoof at the word of command. Barney never did a lick of work in his chubby life and now puts in most of his time happily bullying work horses twice as big as he is. Sport, the sober, substantial, woolly black-and-white 'outside dog', has a kind of job keeping an eye on the place and barking comments on strangers. But Trixie, the 'inside dog', a quivery lemon-and-white fox-terrier bitch with a game shoulder, is just a personality, full of the breed's private mixture of devilment and devotion, always hopefully begging Mr. Handevicht, whom she considers the softest-hearted member of the family, for permission to climb up on the sitting-room couch.

An exotic touch is supplied by the wild pheasants that swarm down from a near-by state game farm, common as crows along the roadside and affording great sport for Harold, who is an ardent hunter, during the short autumn open season. But Martin County, always realistic, considers that although pheasants are good shooting they aren't half so good eating as chicken when you come right down to it. Still, it may not be fair to put any bird up against what the Handevicht chickens turn into on the Handevicht table—fried juicy and crisp in orthodox

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

country style or stewed with dumplings in a special way that, in a long-standing family joke, is known as 'elephant-pie'. The Handevids, operating with unlimited supplies of fresh milk and butter and garden-fresh green stuff, naturally set a brilliant table 365 days a year and three times a day. Even Trixie is an epicure, being very fond of water-melon and daintily refusing to eat bread unless it is thickly buttered.

With Margarieth's marriage, this hearty, wholesome standard of living—and the skill that makes it possible—will cover still more territory. There are still Sundays when the Handevidt daughters join their mother in the old home kitchen to turn out masterpieces from the Handevidt larder, and husbands and sons gather round to discuss projects and exchange ideas. Possibly, a few years hence, there may be a new face in the group and a daughter-in-law in the Handevidt household. Meanwhile Anna will carry on in her usual smooth, capable style.

About the only pampering she gives herself is shutting down the wood range on hotter summer days and using a small tank-gas stove to save perspiration. Even with a washing machine on the job it is no joke to do a weekly washing that always includes at least eighteen men's shirts, not to mention sheets, overalls, and table linen. But the women of this family are brisk workers and proud of their skill in housecraft and anything but sorry for themselves. Although Anna Handevidt certainly works twice as hard and three times as long as many a wife who considers herself rushed off her feet, she candidly admits—a rare admission for any woman to make—that she has much more leisure than her husband. That leisure is not wasted, however. Much of it goes into handiwork—hooking rugs, crocheting and quilting—which she learnt as a girl and has pursued ever since with increasing skill and amazingly beautiful results.

## THE NELS HANDEVIDTS

Even more of her hard-won leisure goes into community activities, such as the Ladies' Aid at the Church and a neighbourhood gardening club of which she was the founder.

Nels and Anna celebrated their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary a couple of years ago. If they do take that California trip, it will be the first formal vacation either of them ever had. The nearest they come nowadays is the week of the annual county fair, usually early in September, when the entire family goes early every day and stays late.

But they don't have jobs—they have a way of living. And you don't need or desire vacations from living.

### *The HANDEVIDTS' Budget*

Income as given here for the Handevvidts cannot and must not be compared with income of any non-farm family. The Handevvidt figure—close to \$1,000 in average expectation—represents merely *cash difference* between what the farm costs to run and what its produce sells for. Most of their food comes off the farm as a result of seasonal work, but without cash outlay. Taxes on their land are business expense and make cash for rent unnecessary. So their \$1,000 can be devoted largely to personal and household expense—on a scale far more generous than \$1,000 a year would mean for a wage-earning family.

<i>Food</i> (groceries, staples)	\$260.00
<i>Coal</i>	60.00
<i>Clothing</i>	400.00
<i>Electricity</i>	60.00
<i>Refrigerating locker</i>	10.00
<i>Miscellaneous</i> (insurance, transportation)	82.00
<i>Telephone</i>	15.00
<i>Newspapers, magazines</i>	18.00
<i>Maintenance of health</i>	50.00
<i>Church, charities</i>	45.00
	<hr/>
	\$1,000.00



*The*  
**CHARLES CARRS**  
*of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania*

**A**LL last winter, a cold one, too, the eight people who live at 1526 North Fifth Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, tried to forget that their \$25-a-month house was equipped with a hot air system. All the fuel they could muster barely kept the water pipes from freezing. Further heat for human beings was out of the question.

Two tons of coal a year is the best they can do. The rest of it was wood that 60-year-old Charles Carr packed home on his back from his WPA job of building remodeling. Often he made the trip twice a day, using his lunch hour to keep up the supply and, instead of eating, just snatched a cup of coffee in the kitchen. When waste wood is unavailable on the job, he rakes the city dump and importunes grocers for wooden packing boxes. 'Catch as catch can,' says Mr. Carr—a hunched, clay-pallid, cacklingly discouraged little man, looking no better for badly needing false teeth that he can't conceivably afford; 'you just gotta use your head to get along in our fix.'

Although equally in need of teeth, his wife, not quite fifty, bears up better. She goes out to do housework and child tending at \$2 a day—\$6 is a good week. This money, along with \$9 a month contributed by son Robert from his \$18-a-month NYA job and a little of Carr's WPA check, pays the rent.

Mrs Carr is by no means well—anæmia and low blood pressure and lungs not so good, with no money to pay for the medicine she needs. But it helps her a lot to get

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

out from under at home, where hopelessness and physical chill inextricably mingle in the atmosphere. Of the warm, clean, brightly furnished house where she works for a nice lady who is her steadiest employer, she says, 'This is kind of my second home.' Even in the Fifth Street house she has more privacy than anybody else, with a big, neat bedroom all her own. Pop, as the whole family call him, sleeps in a small back room on a three-quarter iron bed with two grandchildren under the same blanket. 'Helps keep the little fellows warm,' he explains.

Hopelessness has lasted a little too long for the Carrs' family morale. Violet, the eldest daughter, runs the house and children harshly, with nerves ready to fray into collapse any day. 'I'll end up in the booby hatch if this keeps up too long,' she admits, her mouth drawing in and the nerves of her thin, drawn face twitching hostilely. For four years she stuck with the barber whom she married during the depression—'more to help mother out than for any other reason.' Finally, discouraged with his constant drinking and failure to support his family, even after she had got a court order against him, she gave up and came home. She isn't well either—a gastric tumor, the doctors think, but she hasn't got round to letting them take X-rays. When she does get 50 cents for a couple of hours' work 'redding up' for some neighbouring housewife, the children nag her for nickels the rest of the day with the instincts of little vultures. Washing their clothes, wrangling with them, trying to feed them, make up her life. But cooking is little trouble. There is little to cook.

Breakfast is 'bread soup', which means milk, bread, and sugar. A dime's worth of buns is lunch for her and Vilma and Betty, the younger sisters who don't get lunch at school. When a little chopped meat can be bought, it goes into a mixture of meat, macaroni, canned tomatoes,





Charles Carr is a worker, and son Robert has a National Youth Administration truck-driving job. But the going is tough. As Pop Carr says, 'You gotta use your head to get along in our fix.' Son Robert's guitar helps when things are blackest.



Keeping warm is one of the hardest problems the Charles Carrs of Harrisburg have to face. There's no fire in the stove part of the time.



The Carrs pay \$25.00 a month for this eight-room house and are usually behind on the rent. There are ten of them to shelter. There's a furnace, but no money for coal.

Lawrence's toys come from the trash heap.



Merle (left) is a cripple, 'so I go to open-air school.' He and John, his sister Violet's son, both have Perthes' disease and receive free dispensary treatments.

## THE CHARLES CARRS

and onions. But that is a rare feast. Dinner is far oftener potatoes and noodles or canned beans or fried stale bread that Mrs. Carr has been given on some job. What food there is gets put down into the cellar to keep from spoiling, for there is no icebox. Between the wash and the tramping of the neighbourhood kids, a garden in the tiny plot at the back won't work. When Pop planted a few tomatoes last year the kids used them for balls to play with as soon as they got big and green.

Not an imaginative diet. But feeding eight on a \$40-a-month budget calls for plenty of starch to give at least the illusion of a full stomach. The effects show, of course. Betty, the pale-faced sixteen-year-old daughter, who tried to run away from it all last year, has badly infected tonsils—doctors say she is in for mastoid trouble if they don't come out. But last time they tried the hospital no bed was available for the job. Merle, the sad-eyed twelve-year-old boy, explains without the slightest trace of self-pity that he has to wear these clumsy orthopædic boots because 'I'm a cripple'. Violet's elder son has the same disease—tuberculosis of the bone. It gets them decent food, at least. At the open-air school, which they both attend, they are fed a good hot lunch daily with lots of fruit juice and a pint of milk, although money for the supplementary cod-liver oil they should be taking at home is missing. Since every public school in Harrisburg gives free dental service to children whose parents are on WPA, all the kids' teeth get taken care of. The street they live on has wide brick pavements to play on and plenty of shade, and would look like paradise to an old-time New York slum dweller. But the other effects of a family's falling apart cannot be headed off by diet or dental hygiene or play space.

The WPA supervisor considers the Carrs a problem case—but admits they have plenty of problem cases on

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

their books. Mrs. Carr, harking ruefully back to better times, dates all her family's troubles from that day in 1931 when Pop lost his last good job. 'The change is wot done it,' she says; 'my children was accustomed to having everything their hearts desired. And if I had it to do over, I wouldn't bring 'em up like that no matter how much money I had.'

Troubles have been plentiful, there is no doubt of that. Mr. Carr is by now grandfather of at least two illegitimate children. The eldest two boys, both married, run a joint household on the pay they get, near \$100 a month apiece, from steel-mill jobs that their mother arranged for them with a steel man who goes to her church. But the third boy is a thorough-paced delinquent, with a long police record of petty offences—married, but not happily, to judge from the number of times a week he shows up at his father's house, eats his head off, sleeps the night, and departs with no more greeting than a scowl. He has steadfastly refused to have anything to do with suggestions about the CCC and the kindest thing any member of his family finds to say about him is that he's kind of cracked.

By now spells of vertigo and the consciousness of being too old for employment—as the steel man told Mrs. Carr regretfully—keep Pop from cherishing many illusions about the future. He just hopes vaguely that National Youth Administration work will at least keep young Robert on the strait and narrow. When Lillian Fox married him, he was a jaunty, well-paid handler of big-time construction machinery, and she was a Pennsylvania Dutch girl who had quit school at fourteen to work at the Hershey chocolate plant in Hershey, Pennsylvania. He got a kick out of working in big city after big city and talks about the famous buildings he helped erect in New York and Newark and Pittsburgh,

## THE CHARLES CARRS

making \$2,500 a year when jobs were rife as they were back then. They saved nothing, but then, with eight children coming along at short intervals, saving would not have been easy.

Since 1931 the Carrs have turned from one kind of public aid to another. Pop has now been three years on WPA. Every two weeks he hands his \$24 check over to the local store to keep his credit for groceries good, getting a little change to pay the electricity bill and eke out the rent. He mends his own clothes and goes his own bewildered way at home, only occasionally regardful of the jangling between Violet and the children. Long since he has been reconciled to everything's being a handout—cash from the government, clothes and furniture from Mrs. Carr's employers, even the newspaper secured second-hand from a neighbour. In a letter to WPA he wrote apologetically: 'I don't want nothing but a square deal . . . but I got four children under thirteen.'

Just a few sources of pride are left: They are never more than a month behind at the store and with the landlady. They have managed to keep the youngsters from spoiling the red plush suite in the living room, bought a few years ago with the proceeds of a paid-up insurance policy. The bird's-eye maple bedroom suite in Violet and Betty's room is just as shiny as when it was bought on the day of their marriage. Every Sunday Mrs. Carr marches five or six of her brood off to the united Brethren Sunday school and church. Those donated clothes keep them fitted out decently. But not Pop—'These are my Sunday clothes,' he says, smirking almost without resentment at the dirt-heavy pants and lumberjack he works in.

The wringer on the electric washing machine that they bought in better times never survived the kid's trying to put a softball through it. There are no rolls surviving

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

to bring music out of the big player piano in the front room. Mr. Carr says he'd like to chop it up for firewood but his wife is kind of sentimental about it. The place is full of phonograph and radio cabinets, given by Mrs. Carr's various ladies—but all silent. They have no insides in them any more.

*The*  
**WALTER W. KRIEBELS**

*of Seattle, Washington*

**S**EVEN years ago Mrs. Walter W. Kriebel of 6018 27th Street N.E., Seattle, Washington, was doing the breakfast dishes and trying not to recall too vividly the expression on her husband's face as he had left that morning—not for the office, but to keep on looking for work, any kind of work by now. His walk might be as brisk as ever, his jaws as clean-shaven, his rimless glasses as brightly polished and his blue eyes as clear behind them. But Mimi Kriebel was afraid that some morning she would see in those eyes the conviction, which already troubled her, that forty-five is a tough age to have to start all over again. It already seemed like years instead of months since, after an ominous series of pay cuts, Walt's last position had gone glimmering.

While she was rinsing the glass coffee-maker with unusual care, Walt was steeling himself to ask the manager of the Seattle Fuel Company for a job washing trucks at night. Know anything about motors?—this job calls for being something of a mechanic too. 'No,' said Walt numbly; 'I can drive, but a car's insides don't mean a thing to me.' The manager's eyes reflected his conclusion that this applicant was not exactly the truck-washing type anyway. What was your last job? 'Purchasing agent for a salmon cannery—they folded up last year.' Ever sold anything? 'Sold stoves for a utility company—and a purchasing agent is on the other end of a lot of sales talks.' Hm. Like to sell fuel oil for us on commissions? 'Golly,' said Walt Kriebel with a gulp, 'I'd sure like to try.'

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

Later he stood on a downtown street corner wondering in the pit of his stomach how you sell fuel oil. Along came a businessman with whom he had gone to school. 'Hiya, Walt! What you up to these days?' 'Selling fuel oil,' Walt said, reflecting that so far that was a miserable exaggeration. 'Come right up to the office,' said this middle-aged angel in disguise. 'My partner and I are both putting in oil burners this winter.' Not until the contracts were signed did the telephone ring in the small shingled house on 27th Street, answered by a slim, light-footed, slightly greying lady in a bright house dress. 'Mimi,' said a voice with a catch in it on the other end of the wire, 'I guess we're back in the running again.'

By now Walt is making \$50 a week selling oil on straight salary and his and Mimi's chins are well above water. They were always held pretty high.

Savings had vanished in that jobless interval. They still owed a good deal on the house and a good deal more to doctors. Jack and Bob were far too young for self-support. But Walt's chin still looked good to outsiders, which may be why he got that job just in the nick of time.

When things were worst, Mimi still had the cocky tilt to her nose and the ready smile that moved young Walt to pop her the question away back in 1915, when both were white-collaring in the same office—he as a title-searcher, she as a proof-reader. When this fair-haired, quick-moving Scots-Irish-Canadian girl came into the office to apply for that job, Walt says, it was the nicest sight he ever saw in his life. That was not just his opinion. After watching various and dubious aspirants file in to see the boss about his advertisement, the entire office force up and told him this was the one to hire. But it was Walt who took the long view. Two years later the boss and the annual board meeting agreed to raise Walt's salary to



The Walter W. Kriebels, of Seattle, Washington, have seen some tough times together. To-day they're going full speed ahead. Young Jack is entering college and his younger brother Bob plans to be a doctor. And Walt and Mimi Kriebel grin at each other. It didn't look, for a time, as if things *could* turn out so well.





Mrs. Kriebel is an enthusiastic and successful gardener. The garage, built co-operatively with the next-door neighbour, gets a good coat of paint from Jack and Bob. The Kriebels owed most of the \$4,750 purchase price of their house when, six or seven years ago, Walt lost his job. To-day they're out of the financial woods and the house is a general rendezvous.

## THE WALTER W. KRIEBELS

\$125 a month so they could be married—in January, 1917. Walt says now that they shouldn't have waited that long.

The first World War passed them by because, hard as he tried to get into the navy, uniformed doctors always caught a trace of heart murmur in Walt's chest. In 1921 they started buying their present home—a five-room, one-story job—\$4,750 on long time. Mimi's parents, who had been sharing the Kriebel home and contributing \$20 a month to its upkeep, dug up \$250 to help with the down payment, and moved in, too.

In two years more a tiny but husky baby boy appeared—since 'Mimi' was as close as he could come at first to his mother's given name of Myrtle, Walt has called her that ever since. If the house had only been bigger, Mr. and Mrs. Howe might have stayed on to the gratification of all concerned. But the arrival of a second son, two years after the first, left no room to grow in. Grandpop had his pension—derived from a long stretch of working at the Bremerton Navy Yard—and by the time Bob had got past cribs and play pens, the house was left to the vigorous devices of growing boys and enthusiastic, busy parents. The grandparents still rally round for frequent good times. Walt's married sister is also within reach for holiday dinners and family gatherings.

Their father and mother came from Norway and Sweden, respectively. Mimi's came from around Montreal. But the Kriebels—parents as well as sons—are deep-rooted in Seattle, where they were born. Come Christmas, what with relatives and friends, the shingly little house often threatens to burst its seams.

Walt's nose has never been far from the grindstone, but that doesn't strike him as a hardship. He says you can live like a king in Seattle on a pretty modest income. So this is how kings live in Seattle in families of four:

For one thing, hollow-legged as the young princes are,

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

they eat hearty and well on under \$2 a day. The State of Washington is a market-garden centre and vegetables are cheap during a long season. Grade A milk—a pint apiece a day for each member of the family—is only 12 cents a quart delivered. And Mimi is a roaring good cook—the family agree enthusiastically on her specialities, chili con carne, for instance, and a special spaghetti with tomato sauce. A good deal of high-grade, low-cost baking goes on in the new electric oven. The Kriebels' prime favourite dessert is something Mimi manages to produce from a plain pudding recipe. But this talent requires an audience. At lunch-time, when no one else is home, Mimi has a glass of milk or skips eating altogether. She makes out daily lists and Walt drops in at various groceries on his way back from the office to do the actual buying—not so much because he still fancies himself as a purchasing agent as because storekeepers buy fuel and a contact is a contact.

Eating would be a little cheaper if the others agreed with Walt about sea-food, which swarms in West Coast waters and costs little. As a second-generation Viking—Seattle's large population of sturdy Scandinavians is a great civic asset—Walt would happily eat fish three times a day. Mimi has learned to eat bloaters for Sunday breakfast and, with instructions from Walt's sister, is expert at pickling herring. Her way of frying fresh halibut fillets in rolled cornflakes instead of cracker crumbs is a first-class culinary discovery. She joins Walt philosophically when, after a downtown movie, they blow themselves to Manhattan clam chowder at Don's sea-food place. But the boys are utter heretics, wisecracking about the danger of sprouting fins, and Mimi herself says confidentially that she wouldn't care if she never saw another fish the rest of her life. It's a harmonious household that has that as likeliest cause of internal friction.

Interest, taxes, and a bit of principal on the house are covered by \$25 a month to the bank. The furniture they bought as newly-weds is still sturdy and has come to fit them as snugly as a pet smoking jacket. Newer conveniences being bought on two-year instalments are an electric hot-water heater and the slick electric stove which Mimi finds extremely handy in contrast to its coal-and-wood predecessor. The Kriebel household runs up kilowatt-hours rather freely, but power rates are low in Seattle, and Mimi gets full value from such small luxuries as an electric mixer and a waxer to help the floors bear up under the onslaught of oversize adolescents. No washing machine—laundry includes pretty grubby slacks and sweatshirts, and is sent out on a part wet-wash arrangement for less than \$2 a week. Mimi is a sound and efficient manager—even in the crucial minutes before dishing up a big company dinner, her small kitchen is as uncluttered as a big executive's desk.

The Kriebels save on clothes by the simple method of buying as cheaply and as few as possible. Mimi makes some of her own dresses and never pays over \$7.95, usually at a small-shop sale, for the rest of what, she confesses somewhat ruefully, is a very small wardrobe. One hat a year at \$5.95, always a perky felt to be cocked at just the right angle to accent the live face underneath it. She regards her occasional inability to resist paying \$7 for shoes as a dismal extravagance. Between wearing half-socks in summer and laddered stockings for housework in winter, she makes a dozen pairs of silk last the year round, buying them through a friend in the hosiery business to get excellent quality at 79 cents a pair. The Kriebels seldom miss any angles. The water heater, the electric stove, the magnificent railroad-iron andirons at the summer cottage, the fine old armchair that came out of the skipper's cabin of an old clipper,

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

are all somehow or other the fruit of Walt's knowing the right guy in the right place.

Walt himself may buy a \$30 suit every two years and is very easy on shirts, Mimi says. Since they started working in summer in the parking concession at the local race track the boys have been paying for their own clothes; \$50 apiece a year covers that, since the prevalent mode among Seattle high-school lads is notably informal—corduroy pants and T shirts six days a week. Neither of them has ever owned a hat. When Jack, now eighteen and a freshman at the University of Washington, needed a dinner-jacket outfit for a very formal dance last year, it was a threeway job—jacket borrowed from one lad, pants from another, and a boiled shirt from daddy.

Jack and Bob, now sixteen, both step out to dances practically every Friday night, garbed in Sunday suits and broadcloth shirts and paying \$1.10 for self and girl. Roosevelt High School, where Jack graduated last spring and Bob is now a junior, runs over with secret societies that give these thrifty subscription dances and fervently hope to raise enough admission to pay for hall and orchestra. Emanon is the name of the Kriebel boys' society, of which Jack has been president. The only clutter in the house is the festoon of dance programmes, football tickets, girls' pictures and odd souvenirs round the mirror in the boys' bedroom. The young ladies honoured on the programmes seem to go in for such names as Flo-Flo and Vodo and a 'starlight' dance seems to include such numbers as the Borealis Bounce, the Pluto Prance and the Betelgeuse Bump. Emanon meets at the Kriebels' whenever they can't find any other member's house to meet in, Mimi says, to conduct important business and discuss rootbeer and cake.

A movie is another excuse for a date Saturday night. By unspoken family rule, the week's other five nights

are for sleeping. Jack often brings his girls home to meet the folks—on one occasion Mimi chucklingly hid girl A in a closet to keep her out of sight of Girl B who had unexpectedly dropped in with a crowd. All the time the Kriebels' is a sort of unofficial clubhouse for the boys' gang of six who swim together in summer and ski on Mt. Rainer. One of them broke his neck in a high dive last summer, but was tough enough to be recovering nicely at last report. Another of the lot is young Dave Beck, son of the famous Seattle labour czar who lives down the street in a modest brick cottage and occasionally plays Croesus for young Dave's pals with a steak dinner or a trip. Another of the crew works to help support his family in a Safeway chain store. All are corduroyed, gangly and unbelievably relaxed.

Mimi's mother, whom the boys adore, says, with quite a trace of Scots on her tongue: 'I like to see a mon good-sized.' That is apropos of her grandsons and extremely pertinent. Jack is an easy-moving husky, an inch under six feet, fond of boxing and basketball and rough-housing. Bob, almost as tall and quite as fond of rough-housing, is already running low hurdles on the Roosevelt track team. At any otherwise unoccupied moment, Jack makes a snatch at the back of Bob's neck, and Bob trips Jack to the floor and the resulting knot may take ten minutes to untangle. Mimi says there doesn't seem to be any way of breaking them of wrestling and so far the floors have held up well under the shock of their growing weight. She is definitely of the easy-going school of discipline, with never a spanking to her credit. When the boys were small, they sometimes had to be sent to bed to calm down. Or fractions were knocked off their spending money as penalty for neglected chores. But any serious cracking-down came from their father—Mimi finds it hard to be convincingly stern.

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

Nowadays the chores get done—lawn cutting, floor scrubbing, hedge clipping, dish wiping on occasion—without much being said. Mimi still spends a large part of her time picking up after the boys indoors, but by way of compensation they do a lot of the heavier garden work that backs up her loving care of the family flower beds. Walt is a bit more steady at that sort of thing, but everybody helps—naturally. This trim little house in its slick new coat of paint pays dividends in pride and comfort to the whole family.

Some of the boys' spare energy goes into pretty conscientious manicuring of lawn and shrubs for their next-door neighbour, a retired skilled craftsman from Alaska. That's not a cash job—it pays for the fact that the Kriebels now use both sides of a mutual garage that the two households built several years ago. Materials for his half cost Walt \$100, plus \$50 to old Mr. Johnson for expert planning and the fancy details of the building. Walt learned a lot about carpentry out of working on that job with his own hands. 'We drove nails till hell wouldn't have it,' he says. Then they all turned to and made themselves a neat concrete driveway on the same co-operative basis.

Good neighbours—and plenty of friends all over town. Both Walt and Mimi have been making friends here all their lives. Back when the boys were small, Walt clubbed up with five other fellows to buy a stunning piece of beach-and-bluff on Bainbridge Island, across an arm of Puget Sound from Seattle, where each built a summer cottage for his family. Walt built his own cottage, too, except for a few details of masonry and finish, at a material cost of only \$300. His share of the land was another \$300—and a bargain. From the stretch of lawn among the cottages you can see the Seattle skyline eight miles away across the sound, with the snow-capped Cascades



as background. Huge firs crowd down the steep slope to the blue water. The wide sandy beach piles high with driftwood that makes gorgeous open fires. And there is utter congeniality among the six families, who hand-picked themselves to begin with. Upkeep per cottage, taxes included, runs around \$50 a year.

The Kriebels used to move out to camp early in May and stay until late September, with Walt commuting to work by ferry. They could usually rent the house in town for \$50 a month during that period. But now the boys work in summer, needing room and board in town, and Walt and Mimi skip the camp on their account. They figure it's good for youngsters to learn how to work for pay. Mimi still gives them a dollar apiece of the weekly \$6 Walt allows her for odds and ends beyond food. But that just makes it easier for the boys to put their earnings to serious use.

Those earnings—\$15 a week for Bob, close to \$20 for Jack, who is in a spot to get a fair amount in tips—buy clothes and are quite a leg up on the college expenses problem. When Jack announced last summer that his first year at the university was already in the bank, his cheerful pride was shared by the whole family. He had stayed better than solvent during his senior year at Roosevelt High by spending his lunch hours behind the counter in a small students' eating pot, earning his lunches and a dollar a week. But the summer jobs represent real economic growing up. The idea of summer at the camp—the sun in the clearing and the breeze in the firs and the odour of a neighbour's coffee drifting across first thing in the morning—is enticing, of course. But the Kriebels have had long practice in taking necessity gracefully.

Doctor and hospital bills alone would have taught them that. They are healthy enough, but their luck has

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

been terrible. Every time they get one three-figured charge for an operation paid off, trouble strikes again in a different part of their anatomies. On one such occasion a ruptured appendix almost carried Jack off at the age of ten. Walt has always managed so far to arrange long-term instalments for doctors and hospitals, \$5 a month here, \$2.50 a month there. But the cumulative effect has been crippling, so that, when hard times hit him, he had to let his insurance lapse. Only recently has he been able to start afresh on a \$5,000 straight life policy, supplemented by the \$1,000 of group insurance that goes with his job.

For such reasons the Kriebels lack the effective family car that, according to American standards, should go with their income. The '39 Chevrolet coupé that Walt drives on his job says Seattle Fuel Company on the door and he is fiercely scrupulous about not using it on family affairs. The boys do get a fair amount of use out of a 1931 relic that lives in the other half of the co-operative garage. But they usually get to school or other serious engagements in some friend's less wheezy contraption. When Walt and Mimi feel inclined to a Sunday or a vacation week of motor trip, they club up with another couple who do own a car—often with Walt's sister and her husband.

Recreation represents small cash outlay for Mimi and Walt. The radio gives them a lot of free entertainment. They see a lot of night baseball games, paying general admission of 87 cents and sitting in the box that Walt's company keeps for the entertainment of customers. Movies hardly once a month, always carefully picked in advance—*Gone With the Wind* and *North-West Passage* were typical choices. Picking is often influenced by Mimi's admiration for Spencer Tracy. Perhaps four times a year they cast care to the winds and join up with another

couple or two to make a wreck of a five dollar bill with a great big dine-and-dance evening.

Twice a year it costs another \$5 to entertain Mimi's 'club'—an informal but hard-sticking group of women who have known each other from childhood and still get together regularly for luncheon, sewing, and chitchat. When it's Mimi's turn as hostess she tries out the most intriguing of the recipes she has culled from newspapers and magazines, reasoning shrewdly that fancy experiments in food will go down better with 'the girls' than with her regular audience of three large hungry males.

Walt's membership in a local athletic club gives the whole family privileges. Jack plays basketball there in winter, but an occasional steam bath for Walt or swim for Mimi is as far as the rest of them go. Such occasions are increasingly rare because charges do mount up so. Much more economical for Mimi and a few friends to exercise on hired bicycles at 10 cents an hour. Walt's athletics these days are confined to an occasional round of medium bad golf on a municipal links and brisk bouts with the punching bag in the garage, to the mingled amusement and admiration of his two tall sons.

Bridge plays little part in the Kriebels' life—Mimi happily admits she has no card sense whatever. The big social occasion is Christmas—with a huge smörgåsbord-supper for a crowd on Christmas Eve, a whacking Christmas breakfast for another, smaller group, and a tremendous Christmas dinner for just the family later in the day. They have never been churchgoers, although both parents were reared in religious backgrounds, hers Episcopalian, his Lutheran. The only one of them who hears sermons frequently is Bob, recently given to attendance at a local church with a minister who specializes in young folks.

Mimi and Walt have always voted Republican in state and national elections. In local politics, Walt says, they

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

are hard-bitten independents. He has his own opinion, freely expressed, of people who don't bother with local politics, and can talk shrewdly by the hour on the ins and outs of Seattle's political situation. Lately he has grown equally outspoken on national defence and foreign policy. The third-term idea got him hotter than any other national issue to date.

As a result of those eleven years of home-sharing in the beginning, Mimi's parents are still a close and genial influence. The old gentleman, sometime gripman on a cable car and then caretaker at the navy yard, is still husky enough at eighty-two to do his share of wood chopping over on the island. The boys call his pink-cheeked, blue-eyed wife, Mynie—again their baby version of her name of Wilhelmina. For her those youngsters have been a great compensation for the loss of her own boy in an accident when he was quite small. She glows with pride whenever those long-legged, fair-haired grandsons heave into view.

Casually, Jack says he wouldn't wait for the draft if there was war—he'd be down there enlisting in the navy the moment the bugle blew. Walt, who has been giving the matter plenty of thought, says with the world in its present state we've got to have enough army and navy to talk turkey. He knows, whether he likes it or not, that the old days of defending America with courage and squirrel guns are gone, and admits that peacetime conscription makes sense. With the headlines swollen with war, he and Mimi know what that may mean to their family, and they are taking the risk in stride. They aren't the type for brooding and borrowing trouble. If they were, they wouldn't look anywhere near as young as they do.

## THE WALTER W. KRIEBELS

### *The KRIEBELS' Budget*

Here are the principal items that go to make up the Kriebel family's yearly living costs:

<i>Food</i>	\$700·00
<i>House, payments, taxes</i>	300·00
<i>Instalments on household equipment</i>	120·00
<i>Clothing (boys buy their own)</i>	150·00
<i>Fuel and light</i>	170·00
<i>Insurance</i>	130·00
<i>Laundry</i>	100·00
<i>Boys' allowances</i>	104·00
<i>Recreation and camp maintenance</i>	170·00
<i>Telephone</i>	42·00
<i>Church, community chest</i>	10·00
<i>Newspapers, magazines</i>	17·00
<i>Dentist</i>	40·00
<i>Maintenance of health</i>	225·00
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	322·00



*The*  
**'BO' McMILLINS**  
*of Bloomington, Indiana*

**T**WELVE years ago, when the football coach at Kansas State College was introduced to a newly arrived coed, he was heard to comment in his judicious Texas drawl, 'Why, she looks pretty enough to court!' A speech almost any young thing on campus would have been happy to inspire, since the coach in question was the all-American football hero 'Bo' (officially Alvin Nugent) McMillin. It all happened because Bo had lent his car to another coed to rush with for nineteen-year-old Kathryn Gillihan, transferred to Kansas State for her junior year.

Bo naturally took the football season pretty seriously, so they didn't meet again till it was over. Then one day Kathryn found that a car slowing down to give her a lift contained the redoubtable Bo himself. After that Bo grew better and better acquainted with the interior decoration of the Pi Beta Phi living room as he frequently waited for Kathryn to come flying down the stairs, slender and graceful, to accompany him to a college dance. A few months later Protestant Kathryn began quietly slipping off to near-by Cameron to take religious instruction of a Catholic priest. She had not only promised to marry Bo but was determined to take his religion as well. . . .

In consequence of all that a five-year-old boy named Nuge—short for Nugent—McMillin is now wielding a shovel much too big for him in a backyard sand pile in Bloomington, Indiana, where his dad is football coach at the university of Indiana. A few yards away Janey

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

McMillin, seven, wiry and witchily pretty, is running through skilful monkeyshines on a homemade trapeze, her eight sausage curls swinging saucily. Under the big maple Jere McMillin, eight and chunky, is considering whether to hunt down his roller skates or wander over to watch daddy conduct football practice. Also on his mind is the problem of how to convince daddy that a pony would earn its way by helping to keep the lawn clipped.

Now at thirty-one Kathryn McMillin is just as pretty as she was back in October, 1930, when she and Bo went off to Liberty, Missouri, because they wanted to be married by that same priest who had instructed Kathryn and been transferred there. Soft dark hair, soft dark eyes, a white Irish skin and a troubling oval face like a hand-tinted engraving of London's loveliest duchess back in Disraeli's time. Although Janey followed Jere, and Nuge followed Janey in pretty short order, her figure is just as slender too. She and Bo's dark, quiet, seventeen-year-old daughter by his first wife—his hometown sweetheart, who died a young mother—look and act quite enough alike to be affectionate sisters. This eldest daughter was christened Fleurette. But, as daughter of a man known from coast to coast strictly as Bo, she is never called anything but Bo-peep.

All four are weighty testimony to the fact that girls pretty enough to court often make fine mothers, whether step or regular. These youngsters are all an ingenious combination of being well trained without being inhibited, and their personalities are healthily divergent: Bo-peep is apparently shy, a smiling colleen who devotes herself to making others comfortable, refusing to take her own achievements seriously enough ever to mention them. But then you find out that at her Catholic boarding school at Nazareth, Kentucky, where she is in her junior

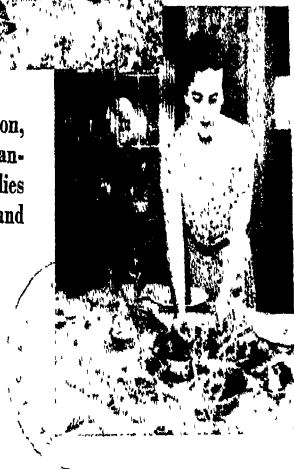




The McMillin house cost \$14,000 and was paid for out of savings. Mr. McMillin built the outdoor flagstone terrace himself at a cost of thirty dollars.



The McMillins, of Bloomington, Indiana, belong to the less-than-two per cent of American families with incomes between \$5,000 and \$10,000 a year.





The children keep their bicycles and scooters in the garage.



'Daddy' Bo McMillin works hard — and successfully — as a football coach at Indiana University.



Both elder McMillins are bridge devotees.

year, she so consistently ran away with the oratorical honours that the school finally changed 'contests' to 'recitals'—and Bo-peep had no further chance at gold medals and cups. She has been in all the school plays, however, and last summer vacation got a part in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, performed by the Indiana University Little Theatre Stock Company.

Jere, with two huge flat beaver teeth set in the middle of a solid grin, is a thoughtful, practical realist, although his reasoning on the subject of that pony is perhaps a trifle visionary. For the most part his world is solid and down to earth, with his collection of farmer's straw hats, the comic strips, joining the Boy Scouts and growing up to be a fireman, as enthusiasms of the moment. Nuge is a little dreamer, given to taking things hard, but oozing wistful good nature and always on the pattering trot. And Janey vibrates with outspoken initiative like a finely bred colt. Bo is inordinately proud of her, but just a shade apprehensive.

'Trouble ahead with Jane,' he says, looking at her fondly; 'too much temperament and will of her own.' When Mrs. McMillin says she knows little about the European war, Janey vivaciously puts in her two-cents' worth: 'I know something about it. I hate Hitler. I wish he'd come to our house because we have a loaded shotgun and we could shoot him.' Then, thinking it over: 'No, I'd take him out to some empty house in the country, so the noise wouldn't bother the neighbours.'

All the children have vocabularies which, age considered, are precociously large and handled with amazing fluency. Undoubtedly their mother's habit of 'reading herself out to them' had much to do with this. Freed by a full-time maid from the lengthiest household chores, Kathryn has used the lion's share of her extra time for the children. Reading aloud is just one of a series of intra-family

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activities which includes games like ringtoss, peggoty, Chinese chequers, and even baseball. Kathryn drives the children to the local parochial school and then home for lunch and back to school again, letting them make the final trip on foot on their own. Janey's big room is official playroom for the pack and the cement floor in the cellar is ideal for roller skating on days too wet to bounce around barefoot on the big shady lawn. In season the lawn makes a fine backdrop for children's parties, which overflow the house on birthdays and other special occasions.

Just the kind of natural, easygoing, calm atmosphere youngsters thrive in—which doesn't mean, however, that Bo and Kathryn have theories in favour of skimping on discipline and letting children run wild. Good-humoured gentling as the rule is firmly modified by Bo's brisk tendency to hail dawdlers with 'Stir yourself there, son!' Even spanking may occur rarely, quickly and effectively, usually as culmination of a too-long-continued series of gettings out of hand rather than for any one infringement of the law. But none of it is like Bo's younger days when, every time he got a licking in school, which might well occur twice a week, his mother nipped a switch off the peach tree in the yard and gave him another to match in the same place. By all accounts Bo's childhood was a stormy affair. But for ordinary wear, Kathryn's quiet ability to listen to youngsters' complications and give them sympathetic common sense in exchange is all that's needed with his children. Kathryn is no human statue without a nerve in her body—like all Eve's daughters, she frazzles on occasion. And, when the strain is highest during the football season, only a nightly movie will keep Bo from the breaking-point of tension. But the way these two can snap out of their own troubles when dealing with their children's, so that the youngsters

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scarcely ever detect a ripple below the surface, marks the born parents.

This autumn Nuge is excited about going to school for the first time. And Jane is excited about being moved up into the allowance-receiving ranks, where Jere, with 25 cents a week out of which must come a nickel for church collection, and Bo-peep with a glamorous \$5 bill monthly just for movies, sodas, and notions, already are. Jane is on the first rung of the ladder with 15 cents a week and the same obligation toward a collection nickel as Jere. But she feels it's an important rung in the solemnly desirable business of growing up.

Autumn means a good deal more than just back to school, though, to the McMillin family. With a Big Ten Conference schedule to play, it's the family's most hectic time. Kathryn goes to all games and shrieks from the stands, while Bo sits on the bench among his blanketed squad and chews his knuckles and decides all over again that it's far less grief to be out there playing. Jere often goes with his mother and gives his own young lungs plenty of action, and Bo-peep will come up for something special like the traditional season's wind up with the Purdue game.

Bo is determined not to urge Jere to play football—but still he can't help jealously watching the development of Jere's eye and co-ordination while playing catch with him before supper, and studying the gathering muscles in his sturdy legs which bid fair to grow as heavy and powerful as daddy's. Kathryn says, privately, it will break Bo's heart if the boy doesn't get football fever. Nor does the prospect that he will get it worry her. She married Bo a couple of years before loss of zing in his legs made him quit professional post-season football, and the notion of her menfolks out there risking concussion on a frozen field is all in her day's work.

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Bo is no beauty and never was. It doesn't worry him that for a man of forty-four, even though he weighs only fifteen pounds more than in his playing glory, backyard badminton and billiards at the Faculty Club must take the place of off-tackle slants. For his job keeps him up to his neck in his beloved football. And doing very well at it. Two years ago the university signed him to a ten-year stretch—the longest contract ever given a football coach. Even if things weren't fine, his gently loyal wife and four adoring kids would keep him right side up with care.

Kathryn's folks were Irish and Welsh Missouri pioneers, some taking a large part in the savage troubles when Missouri drove out its Mormon interlopers a hundred years ago. These particular Missourians were an inhospitable lot who didn't spare the pistols on unwelcome visitors, and a twinkle comes into Kathryn's eye as she says, 'We aren't so awfully proud of that particular part of the family history.' Not proud perhaps, but definitely fascinated. Kathryn talks eagerly of those colourful days, and her uncle, Roland J. Britton, is an enthusiastic member of the Missouri State Historical Society and author of a book on the Mormon wars. The family has had its roots solidly in Missouri ever since Kathryn's great-grandfather came from Maryland ninety-four years ago to settle in the little town of Gallatin and successfully practise medicine there. The last three generations have been lawyers, still in Gallatin and still successful.

So Kathryn Gillihan was born and raised and educated in a spot alive with reminders of her family's past. She must have been a good scholar—the local high school had such a hard time keeping her busy that in her last year her family decided a little extracurricular activity was indicated. Bookkeeping in the local garage was about the only thing available and she acquired a certain

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amount of training and the vast sum of \$80 out of the experiment. She took two years of college work at Stephens College at Columbia, Missouri, before transferring to Kansas State College at Manhattan, Missouri, to qualify in 'industrial journalism'. Industrial journalism, it seems, is the label which, in an industrial school, must be tacked on any ordinary course in journalism to bring it in line with the school's policy. But Kathryn was not much concerned about labels. She says she took journalism because it sounded 'as interesting as anything else'. Her real ambition was ever and always to be a homemaker, and when Bo came along she was unregretfully willing to turn her back on industrial journalism and all its works—including the sheepskin at the end of the trail.

Bo is just twice as Irish as Kathryn, with both sides of his family living up to his mother's maiden name as O'Reilly. The McMillins first hit Texas, where Bo was born on a farm near Hillsboro, well before Texas was American territory, and his slow-sliding speech is of utterly Texan and utterly non-Hibernian as Fort Worth itself, where he was raised and went to school—somewhat turbulently. An old friend avers that he 'showed unmistakable proclivities toward becoming a tramp'. Indeed, it may have been only the gridiron that got the wrinkles out of Bo and made a bad prophet of his friend. At the high school in Fort Worth he began to star at football and worship at the gifted feet of Coach Myers. When Myers went to Centre College, the shining lights of his Fort Worth team, including young Bo, followed him loyally and gave him the nucleus of his 'Prayin' Colonels', the most famous dark-horse team ever to appear in collegiate football.

Centre is a small, inexpensive college, but getting there was a hard squeeze financially for Bo just the same. Things had been tough all around for years, with Bo's

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father missing fire as a storekeeper and having to supply a family of eleven by day labour. From twelve on Bo and his elder brother alternated work with school to help keep their folks afloat. At college he shared a room over a grocery with two equally stony-broke team-mates and earned much of his student's living by acting as advance salesman for Chautauqua shows in rural Kentucky. Bo had been acting team captain as a freshman and 2nd-year man, captain as a junior and senior. Local fame as a brilliant quarterback helped a lot in this Chautauqua job. National fame of the same kind has earned him a rousing good living ever since.

He has no idea what became of the money he made in his first year after college—coaching at Centenary College in Louisiana, playing pro games, writing and speechmaking. But thrifty common sense came along soon, encouraged by the responsibility of being a family man. When he bought the Bloomington house two years ago, he had almost the full price of \$14,000 saved up in building-and-loan, plus various life-insurance assets totalling \$42,500 face value. (Thirty thousand put into National City Bank and Cities Service stocks went, of course, gloriously flop in 1929.) But the house and the insurance are a very comfortable cushion behind the splendour of a coaching salary that has always run between \$6,500 and \$10,000 a year. Just now, what with salary and speaking fees, Bo can count on close to five figures. Football does pay—if you're an All-American quarterback with a knack at handling youngsters and elders and a strong sense of responsibility to both.

As unchallenged managing director of the family, Bo goes in for the same quiet emphasis he displays in the locker room. He never swears at the team. But he can put as much fervour into the phrase 'Man alive!' as a veteran quartermaster could get into all the ruddier



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words he learned on the Shanghai Bund. With an attention to domestic detail rare among husbands, he knows just where the money goes, as the McMillins pay their way promptly for necessities, solid comforts, and such luxuries as they are able to afford. Earlier in their marriage, Bo and Kathryn kept strict account of all spending for a stretch of eighteen months. Then they gave it up—Kathryn found it something of a nervous strain to be forever recording in a little notebook on her knee or against the wall, wherever she happened to be, the fact that a certain bolt of ribbon cost 42 cents and a certain can of baked beans 10—and Bo agreed it wasn't worth it. In the meantime, however, he had got a pretty accurate gauge on things and can now show just where and how and why they spend close to \$400 a month on living. Taxes—real estate, personal property and income—are some \$600 a year more and the life-insurance premiums are \$1,800 a year. The balance, between \$2,000 and \$3,000, is likely to go into United States Savings Bonds, which, being regularly purchasable in any amount, Bo says, suit best for a man with a regular monthly pay check.

Things aren't cheap in Bloomington—they seldom are in small college towns. A good maid can be got for \$32 a month, of course. But the McMillins' table, which stints on nothing, costs close to \$3 a day for the seven of them. Milk alone is \$12 a month. Neither Bo nor Kathryn goes light on clothes. His pet Madras shirts cost him from \$3 to \$6 apiece and he seldom pays less than \$65 for a suit, often going to \$75, with Kathryn helping in the picking. He insists on that part, bringing home the suit for her inspection before making any decision, if for some reason she can't go along.

To play her part in university social life, which she does with gracious ease, Kathryn needs a sizable and smart

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wardrobe—a minimum of three evening dresses, a number of little afternoon frocks, usually in the \$22.95-\$39.95 range. Still, her pet evening gown—cool, white, statuesque crêpe with a wide gold belt—was only \$14.95. Five hats a year average around \$7.50 each, stockings around \$1.10—a dozen pairs at a time every six months—shoes around \$9, with evening slippers three or four dollars less. But Kathryn confesses that shoes are her special weakness and when something breathlessly new and dainty is on display in a local window, she may break down and go in and pay all of \$16.50. Most of her shopping is done locally with an occasional grand tour of Indianapolis to keep abreast. A sealskin coat, purchased two years ago for \$300, is expected to keep Kathryn's slim shoulders warm in the grandstand for another five years or so.

Although not built for them, their house is a neat fit for their needs. Its stone-and-white-clapboard serenity sits against a rich slope of well-kept lawn, with a big maple as looming background and neat shrubs carefully barbered. Bo and Kathryn have a big bedroom-bath-and-dressing-room at one end of the upstairs while the youngsters inhabit the other—a small room for Bo-peep, who is away at school so much, a medium room for the two boys, and a big room for use as community playroom as well as Janey's dormitory—all served by another bathroom to prevent too much traffic jam at tooth-brushing time in the morning.

Living-room and dining-room are quietly luxurious with traditional mahogany and bright upholstery—particularly the little dining-room, on account of the blazing chest of solid silver that Bo gave Kathryn last Christmas. He says with a chuckle that he is hoping to persuade her that that silver also constitutes an anniversary present for the next fifteen years. An apparently bottomless hall

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closet, which Bo calls 'a woodpecker's nest', affords moderate protection for all this from Jere's boxing gloves, Nuge's sand-pile paraphernalia, Jane's roller-skates.

The kitchen is a housewife's dream of enamelled cabinets and electrical appliances. Bo is just as proud of it as Kathryn and knows as much about the why of the out-size electric mixer, the height of the workshelves, the design of the hood over the electric stove and the blower fan above it to exhaust fumes and heated air. The family radio is nowhere near so impressive as the kitchen's electrical gadgets. Bo says he bought one expensive radio and it irritated him profoundly by going out of date in no time. Now he's going to wait until the very last jot of perfection is added before he plunges up to the hilt again. They aren't a very radio-fanatical family anyway, except for Bo-peep who likes to turn on Jack Benny or the Hit Parade whenever the 'crowd' barges in.

Bloomington has made the lot of them warmly welcome. Two of the academic deans are Bo's regular opponents at billiards. The head of the public speaking department and his trim wife, resident across the way, come over regularly to play desperate family bridge of an evening. The men usually take the ladies roundly into camp. With the Norvells and several other such couples the McMillins belong to a neighbourhood badminton club that plays earnestly for several hours of an afternoon and then stays for supper at one or another member's house. Bo also belongs to the country club, but he is too much of a family man to use the place much, he says—his golf-playing has dwindled down to about ten rounds a year.

Although an honorary member of most campus organizations, he is not much of a joiner. But Kathryn is active in several clubs—the Navajo, Bloomingtons' oldest women's social organization, the Pi Beta Phi

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alumnae, the faculty women's club, the Psi Iota Xi, which fills the same place that the Junior League would in a larger town. Psi Iota Xi runs a Thrift Shop, stocked up with all the used clothing, furniture, dishes, and odds and ends Bloomington householders can be coaxed to part with, and staffed two hours daily by energetic members pledged to contribute twenty-four hours each year. The local dramatic club, of which Kathryn is a member, meets once a month during the term to read and walk through plays. They found the McMillin house arrangement ideal for their production of *Life with Father* last spring.

University social occasions are frequent and Bloomington likes to get dressed up to the nines for them. Fortunately Kathryn looks her best in evening gowns, and Bo is unusually philosophical about boiled shirts. Although his costume when relaxing is characterized by an open shirt-collar and a habit of continually tucking his shirt-tail back into his pants, he turns out pretty splendid in a dinner-jacket. The McMillins have sort of slipped out of the dancing habit but big special parties like the Junior Prom or the president's reception bring them out on the floor again. And occasionally, when chaperoning a girls'-club house party, they will desert the traditional chaperon's card table to try out a brisk step or two in the spirit of the good old days at Kansas State.

So comfortable an income and so active a social life have not weaned any of them away from old time family living. Bo is a great one for tradition, just as tradition. If time is scarce he hires a man to mow the lawn, but he'd rather do it himself whenever possible. He does all the voting in the family—a kind of Democrat, as Texans must be, but open to argument. He voted for Hoover, for instance, before he swung hopefully to Roosevelt, to desert him only when the tradition-wrecking

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matter of the third term came up. To defend the sort of tradition he values, he's ready to get into uniform again as he did in 1918, any time they want him—and he's pretty thoroughly convinced they're going to want him.

It doesn't disturb Bo that Kathryn is not the slightest bit interested in politics, has never even voted in a national election. She is more concerned with other traditions—family traditions such as the special occasions that call for her turning to in the kitchen to make the famous light rolls or Dutch apple cake—Bo-peep's favourite—that no mere maid can approach. When at home Bo-peep takes over the daily straightening up of the second floor and helps the maid with the all-day regular weekly cleaning. When Bo and Kathryn are out for the evening, she takes care of the youngsters. Jere is errand runner and trash burner, Janey is in sole charge of keeping the playroom neat, and even little Nuge, earnest and energetic, is detailed to keep the yard picked up.

Bo's job involves lots of travel, to coaches' and rules committee meetings, to make speeches at alumni gatherings and Chambers of Commerce and such. The last two summers he and Kathryn have gone to New York, where Bo speaks at the *Herald Tribune's* coaching school. The two of them are still looking back rapturously on a particularly grand trip to the Coast in 1938. Several reliable local women, one or another of whom can always be summoned in to take charge of the children, make it easier for Kathryn to get away, and many a professional trip has been turned overnight into a vacation lark. Then once or twice a year Kathryn duly drives the youngsters out to Gallatin to visit her family, while Bo wanders round Bloomington like a lost soul, haunting the movies and eating his meals dolefully at the University Union until they all return.

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Bo cheerfully admits he is a born family man with the good luck to marry a girl who had always had the sole ambition to be a homemaker. He makes a good, shrewd speech, has lots of friends among his coaching colleagues and others, reads the papers, likes movies with plenty of action, keeps himself up on world affairs and his mind elastic. A man's man, sure of his niche in the world. So keen on his work that he can't quite contemplate ever retiring from some connection with football.

But . . . the best place and things in the world are the house he owns and the family that inhabit it. Nothing so much fun as hunting up the field glasses and going bird stalking with the youngsters. Nothing like the symphony of lively noises under that spreading roof. That small noise is Nuge carrying out some experiment on the utterly good-natured person of Junior, the McMillins' solemn chow dog. That much larger noise is Janey and Jere enthusiastically roller-skating in the basement. The symphony reaches a climax when, about the kids' bedtime, Bo goes upstairs and they all charge the staircase—the first up is first in line to be 'put over the moon', a complicated species of romping which involves a shrieking child in pyjamas and a grinning father juggling same with great dexterity in spite of squeals and squirms. Kathryn looks on smiling and, at the proper moment, applies the quietus. They make a good team.

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### *The MCMILLINS' Budget*

Few families keep a budget as accurate and complete as Bo McMillin's. Here's where the money goes:

<i>Food</i> (\$85 a month)	\$1,020·00
<i>Milk</i> (\$12 a month)	144·00
<i>Clothes</i> (except Bo-peep)	750·00
<i>Furniture</i> (annual replacements)	100·00
<i>Upkeep of house and lot</i> (new paint every 4 years)	100·00
<i>Maid</i> (\$32 a month)	384·00
<i>Laundry</i> (\$12 a month)	144·00
<i>Car upkeep</i> (\$15 a month)	180·00
<i>Annual payment for new car by exchange</i>	300·00
<i>Fuel</i> (oil burner, hot air)	130·00
<i>Electricity</i> (\$15 a month)	180·00
<i>Phone</i> (\$6 a month)	72·00
<i>Magazines, newspapers, books</i>	75·00
<i>Medical and dentists' bills</i>	150·00
<i>Contributions, charities</i>	150·00
<i>Bo-peep</i> (\$5 monthly allowance, transportation, clothes, school expenses)	600·00
<i>Small children's allowances</i> (Jere 25c. weekly, Janey 15c., including nickel for church)	20·80
<i>Entertainment</i>	100·00
<i>Country-club dues</i>	45·00
<i>Taxes</i> (real estate, personal property, income)	600·00
<i>Insurance premiums</i>	1,800·00
	\$7,044·80





*The*  
**THOMAS E. WILSONS**  
*of Chicago, Illinois*

FAMILY jokes usually tell a lot about people. The Thomas E. Wilsons, for instance, are still chuckling over the fifteen-year-old mystery of Mrs. Wilson's electric runabout—one of those little struggle-buggies that steered with a tiller. Car and chauffeur were always available, but Mrs. Wilson much preferred to drive herself around Chicago in the electric, slowing up traffic, getting hooted at by small boys and generally meandering at her own independent gait. Her packing magnate husband and growing son and daughter expostulated for years in vain. Then one morning the electric just plumb disappeared from the five-car garage at the back of the Wilsons' baronial town house. In its place stood a shiny new roadster. Nobody ever admitted knowing what became of the electric, although Mr. Wilson once hinted darkly that a search of mid-western industrial museums might turn it up.

Mrs. Wilson took her rout philosophically. She gave the roadster a fair trial—drove it several hundred miles before permanently renouncing driving because petrol engines were not her style. The Wilsons never do things that aren't their style. If they wanted to keep up with the wealthier Joneses in terms of sables and private 'planes they quite easily could, for they are definitely rich. But they happen not to care for sables and private planes. For them pots of money have meant merely an opportunity to live exactly as they—and not the Astorbilts—like to live; comfortably, that is, sensibly, and with a cheering lack of swank.

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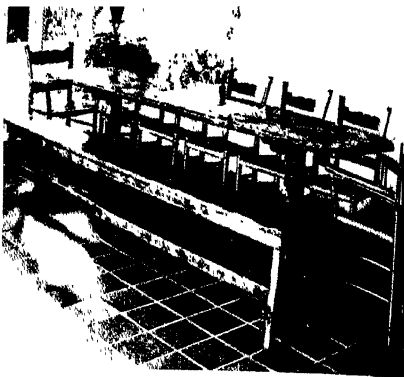
They do themselves well, of course, with a 1,100-acre stock farm just north of Lake Forest, one of Chicago's plushest North Shore suburbs, and a massive, three-storey, battlemented and mullioned greystone town house on the conservative old South Side, a generous tree-studded lawn, geranium-planted and low-hedged, giving plenty of elbow room. When the rest of the family are at the farm, old Mrs. Foss, Mrs. Wilson's mother, stays on with just a housekeeper and a companion maid, keeping an eye on the huge walnut-panelled living room with the immense oil portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, the great oak-panelled hall and dining-room and all the rest of the twenty-four rooms, including a ballroom now retired into storage space. Mr. Wilson says she stays because she prefers to be near the bright lights. At ninety-two, she is still hearing and speaking her mind clearly, and looking almost as young as her daughter, who strongly resembles her. A grand old lady who can tell you all about the Chicago fire and being taken to see Abraham Lincoln's body lying in state, and has lived to become the most ardent moviegoer in the family. An acquaintance with Mrs. Foss goes far to explain how and why the Wilsons so competently manage swankless comfort.

Under her tutelage little Elizabeth Foss was raised the old-fashioned domestic way in a solid house on Chicago's Indiana Avenue built by her grain-broker father who died when she was seven. His family make her eligible for membership in the D.A.R. and her mother's family remember proudly that the first white woman to go down the Lachine Rapids in a canoe was Elizabeth's great-grandmother. At seven or so she started learning to cook, with candymaking as a tempting first step. From the dressmaker who came in to make the family frocks and petticoats she learned how to sew up seams and cut patterns. When she was old enough to attend



Mr. and Mrs. Thomas E. Wilson examining an old ivory miniature in their collection.

The construction of this trestle table, one of a pair, is the same as that of America's oldest table. The Wilsons' tables were a gift from a friend who had them specially made.



It takes four days to cut the lawn round the Wilsons' Lake Forest estate. Chairman of the board or not, Tom Wilson keeps in close touch with his business. As a boy he cured hams himself.

## THE THOMAS E. WILSONS

demure evening parties, which began at eight and stopped at twelve sharp, she was reminded frequently that to stay out after twelve o'clock is to be 'either weak or wild'. At twenty-four she married young Tom Wilson, whom she had met at a Presbyterian church supper, and went to live in his father's ten-room house with one maid and plenty of opportunity to turn her early training to account, especially when one year later—almost as an anniversary present, she says—a daughter was born.

At the time they were married Tom was already doing pretty well with \$6,500 a year from the great packing firm of Morris and Company. But one of the first things she had told him after he popped the question was that any time it seemed indicated, she could feed and keep him well and comfortably on \$100 a month. She still could—although for many a year, even in depression, Tom's income has stayed over the edge of six figures.

Pink faced, silky-white haired, a little breathless in her soft speech, Elizabeth Wilson carries on in her mother's tradition, doing her own marketing daily and insisting on paying Wilson and Company full price for every prime roast and leg of lamb from the best the huge organization offers. Even when the family are out in the country, Mrs. Wilson drives in with her husband to make her meat selection in person at the plant. Good servants are a help in her large-scale housekeeping, of course, but she keeps rather fewer than most women in her situation would. A staff of six—butler-houseman, chauffeur, cook, two maids, and a laundress—covers both huge establishments, most of them moving back and forth with the family. She evidently knows how to hang on to good servants, too. The chauffeur who, with his wife and children, has his own house on the Lake Forest estate, has been with the Wilsons thirty-two years. The laundress, who in summer switches to the

country three or four days a week, has been with them forty years. Mrs. Wilson treats them all with great consideration—vacations with pay for everybody and promptness at meals for family and guests as a rule of the house which never seems to need much enforcing. The cook's advice on meal planning is always sought, with the lady of the house deferring to the judgment of the culinary expert on many points. Mrs. Wilson has never been able to understand how anybody could find house-managing dull. Some new problem to be solved comes up daily, each meal is in a way a novel experience. It suits her fine that, in her own words, daddy should be 'the thinker and doer. I'm just a busy housewife'.

She does belong to the Woman's Club and is on the membership committee of the Women's Athletic Club. She enjoys an occasional game of friendly bridge, although her husband does not play, but refuses to give too much time to it and has never played for money. She doesn't find much time for reading either, but Mr. Wilson accuses her of succumbing to 'lecturitis'—lectures, she says defensively, are a fine way for her to find out what she *doesn't* want to read. Dinner parties are frequent in winter at the Woodlawn Avenue house, with Tom fussing mildly about having to get all dressed up, and Mrs. Wilson revelling in getting all dressed up herself in soft, beautifully made evening gowns, and herself supervising the minutest details of table arrangement. The country house is usually jammed with week-end guests who, with other friends from the neighbourhood, are treated to barbecues or picnics under the great solitary elm in the pasture. There used to be mammoth parties in town at Christmas and Thanksgiving with all the various branches of the family attending, since they are, as Mr. Wilson says, a 'stick-together bunch'. But now that

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brothers and sisters and cousins have developed large families of their own, these have been whittled down to the immediate Wilson family. Most characteristic of all, though, is Mrs. Wilson's almost daily dropping in at her daughter's house in Kenilworth, Illinois, about half-way between the farm and town, to leave domestic largess behind her in the shape of fancy hams and bacon from the Wilson plant or, when headed the other way, melons and tender broilers from the farm. Daughter Helen says she fully appreciates the strategic location of her 'half-way house'.

For years now the Wilson's life has concentrated on the country, with the town house important only in autumn and winter. And many a winter week-end sees them out at Edellyn Farms—a name portmanteaued out of the names of their children, Edward and Helen, who were just gangly youngsters when the place was bought. Mr. Wilson likes to say he bought the place first to pension off a couple of favourite carriage horses that were getting old. Since 1,100 acres is a generous allowance for only two horses, he may also have liked the country himself and wanted his youngsters to have a lavish share of it. Anyway in 1915 he borrowed some of the horses' pasture allotment as a site for the present country house, employing the same architect who in 1910 had built the city house.

As Helen and Ed grew up the Wilsons wondered somewhat wistfully what the farm would be like without kids to fall off ponies, learn to skate on the pond in winter and get wet in it in summer, to patronize the rustic playhouse on the lawn, get stung by wasps in the garden, and mess around with the croquet set. Then Helen solved the problem by getting married to a rising young man named Williams, now superintendent of the Wilson plant, and producing four granddaughters to take over where

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she and Ed had left off. A couple of the young ladies, now stairstepping from seven to thirteen, are usually to be found over at 'Cow-pa's'—their pet name for their grandfather—often with hordes of small friends who make the grounds more of a juvenile riot than ever. As soon as you start wondering what gives the huge Edellyn living-room so cheerful an informality, the answer appears in the shape of a small blond-haired girl dragging a battered express wagon through it on the way to the front door for some important purpose of her own.

Some of Ed and Helen's house parties used to pack the farmhouse to capacity for all the fact that, counting in the little sleeping porches which abut from nearly all the bedrooms, there are twenty-one beds apart from the servant's wing. But the house's blue-shuttered, white-shingled, rose-climbed vastness is not Gold Coast style and nobody wants it to be. The shallow pool outside is not to be mistaken for a swimming pool—amphibian members of the family are content to swim at one of the near-by country clubs. The furniture scattered through the large rambling rooms is of prime, sturdy quality but notably haphazard, like the welter of baseball mitts, tennis bats and sailboats in the living-room closet. Nobody has ever bothered to fuss about matching periods. Plenty of towels in the bathrooms, but neither do they try to match and they have obviously been laundered again and again, with good quality wearing well. The huge cube of screened porch downstairs, where it is always cool, even in Illinois summers, shows spots where screening gone in holes was thriftily patched, not replaced.

A suspicion of expensive slickness in the smart metal-and-leather porch furniture is at once counteracted by the old-fashioned homeliness of the library; exactly as the brand-new fluorescent lights in one of the town house bathrooms are smashingly contradicted by the



tremendous old brass bed, as shiny as the day it was bought, in old Mrs. Foss's bedroom. Or the slightly gloomy magnificence of the collectors' pieces downstairs, by the crisp bedpillow, plainly and sensibly in full view in Mr. Wilson's den, ready for the cat nap he takes when he comes in exhausted from a day at the plant.

Only three cars in the five-car town-house garage, but good ones—a Cadillac limousine, a Lincoln coupé, a Packard convertible. To make sure of his money's worth, Mr. Wilson runs good cars for years before exchanging. The Lincoln is four years old and still purring away as contentedly as ever. In practical effect, the family has only two cars, because young Ed, a married man in his own right since last June, uses the Packard. When it was bought he diffidently suggested that it would be nice to have his mother's initials on its doors. Mr. Wilson gave instructions to that effect, perfectly aware all the time that Ed's initials are the same as his mother's.

Edellyn itself is a kind of private kingdom, stretching fat and far beyond the big lawn which takes a power mower four days to clip. Its farmers and wives and families, farmhands, stablemen, and gardeners are so numerous that the place rates its own school, general store, and railroad station on the Milwaukee Railroad that runs along one edge of the property. This is no musical-comedy farm. It often breaks even, sometimes makes a little profit. What with six dairy cows, lots of chickens and a large and zealously tended vegetable garden, practically everything on the Wilson's toothsome summer menus is fruit of their own vine and fig tree, all fresher and tastier than anything even millionaires can buy in city markets. To make matters even better, a small greenhouse helps rush the season on vegetables.

All feed for the stock is grown on the farm and any garden surplus is handed over to the farmer's wife who

runs the boarding-house for the seven bachelor farmhands. Firewood for town and country use comes from the timber on the place, while Mr. Wilson insists on constant replanting to avoid depleting it. Shrubs and trees for decorative use on the estate are Edellyn grown and Mr. Wilson is particularly proud of the healthiness of a row of wispy little gingko trees.

Among the eleven dogs on the place, particular family pets are a couple of young setters, an elderly fox terrier, and an English sheep-dog pup, called the Panda because he hairily and taillessly looks the part and navigates panda-style. The Panda's hairiness was nearly the death of him the time he tried to imitate the superb swimming of the setters in the pool, got waterlogged, sank, and had to be hastily fished out by an eye-witness. Half a dozen saddle horses are headed up by Mr. Wilson's pet mount, a big pinto pony from his New Mexico ranch. The heads of the prize team of Clydesdale draft horses are so lofty that you can stand upright beneath their jaws. There is a sizable drove of pretty special hogs—Berkshire and Poland China crosses for the most part. But the aristocrats of the place, rating far more luxury than any of the human beings, Wilsons included, are the world-famous herd of shorthorn cattle that make the name Edellyn known wherever men raise good beef.

These blocky bluebloods lead a life of luxury in a stable neat and clean as a ship's deck, screened more elaborately than the Wilsons' sun porch, lighted with electricity and cooled in summer by big barber-shop electric fans. The refinements of their toilet are best indicated by the fact that, when Ed's new wife wanted to shampoo her hair last summer, she borrowed some of the cattle's special castile soap for the job. King of the herd is a great mild-eyed white bull named Calrossie Mercury, winner of 1939's grand championship in Scotland, bought by Mr. Wilson

for some \$8,000 and brought over by a special valet. Expense well justified, says Mr. Wilson, when you figure the good this particular bull is going to do American shorthorn stock. The husky Icelfander named Allen Atlason, who is general manager at Edellyn, can reel you off the pedigree of any bull calf in the herd so many generations back that he sounds like a 'begat' chapter in the Bible. So can Mr. Wilson, exuding pride and interest as he stands there, erect, stiff-collared and, for all his seventy-two years, as hale as Calrossie Mercury himself.

On the lawn stands a bronze-tableted monument with a special inscription to Browndale Count, the first great bull of the Edellyn herd. Before the library fireplace a glazed screen preserves all his grand championship purple ribbons. The bookshelves hold a solid fifteen feet of books and records on shorthorns, dating back to 1865. Mrs. Wilson started a mild rebellion the other day, however, when she found on returning from town that Tom had quietly hung a fancy new oil portrait of Calrossie Mercury's broad and curly-fronted head over the living-room fireplace. Bulls, she maintained, however aristocratic, belong in pastures, not in china shops nor yet in the most informal of living rooms. At the moment a compromise is likely: for three days a week Mrs. Wilson may hide his shorthorn majesty behind a drapery of tasteful Chinese embroidery.

Every June Mrs. Wilson has a mammoth social assignment in the big lawn fête that goes with the annual Edellyn cattle sale—a sort of formal debut for the year's calves—to which cattlemen flock from all over the nation. So do the neighbouring farmers, with wives and children—not to buy, but come just for the ride and the party. All are welcome, six or seven hundred of them, for the sake of hospitality and the future of American beef cattle. Cooks and supernumeraries from the Wilson and Com-

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pany plant cook and serve the Gargantuan lunch under the oak trees. But the burden of seeing that things go smoothly and that everybody feels at home is Mrs. Wilson's—and, at the end of the day, she is usually tottering on her feet. But, even though she admits to being well on the shady side of sixty, she never dreams of handing the job to somebody else. She knows what those precious cattle mean to Tom and is glowingly proud of him as he bobs up all over the place all day, by all odds the handsomest man on the grounds.

Straight as a pine tree, with clear blue eyes, a snow-plough chin, a beaked nose and thick white hair with a wave in it, he has the air of a world-renowned actor-manager of the old school. His ready grin and husky chuckle, softening things just in time, have made him as successful in his relations with subordinates as he has been in his business. The office boys at the plant, for whom he gives a special Thanksgiving dinner party each year, have such a bad case of hero worship that they go about unconsciously imitating the way he talks, walks, and sits down. 'Nahthing' for 'nothing' is about the only trace of his Scottish-Irish descent left in his speech. But Tom Wilson was born on an Ontario farm, which he is now buying back for sentiment's sake, of parents fresh over from County Armagh, and Scots-Irish stamina never showed up stronger. Of course, he takes care of himself. He hasn't smoked since, at twenty-five, he and a friend made a mutual swearing-off bet of a silk hat—which, in those days, he says 'would have been about like having to buy a house and lot'. Though not terribly keen on golf, he is very proud of the special set of left-handed clubs presented to him by the sporting goods end of Wilson and Company. But he rides and loves it. While the family are on the farm, he goes into the office every business day, walking ahead immediately after breakfast

and usually getting in a brisk three miles before the car catches up with him. And every year he has rigidly stuck to a solid month's vacation.

For years that vacation consisted of hunting trips in New Mexico with his best friend, George Martin, the president of the Sherwin-Williams paint outfit. The silvertip bearskins on the library floor came out of those trips. When New Mexico began to get hunted out, he invested in a cattle ranch down there as further excuse for continuing to go there, he says. It should be noted, however, that both cattle breeding and cattle ranching are fine ways to get the point of view of the cattle rancher, who is, obviously, all-important to the meat business. Tom Wilson has always been enthusiastic about his business and businesslike about his enthusiasms.

Wives seldom go along to the ranch, although Mrs. Wilson had fun picking out gay and simple furnishings for the living quarters. Mrs. Wilson gets her vacation in winter, going down for a month or so with her mother to Dunedin on Florida's west coast. Ed and his pretty new wife—a Vassar graduate, daughter of a Congregational minister in Germantown, Pennsylvania—honeymooned at the ranch late last spring. Pauline is a keen horsewoman, which fits well into her new family, and already well acquainted with the fun of skiing on Edellyn's snowy roads in winter and running tractors in the summer. When Ed met her, she was working in the personnel department and teaching a course at North-Western University. Until the knot was irretrievably tied, she kept from him the guilty secret that the Phi Beta Kappa Society had caught up with her in college.

This adaptable, gently bright daughter-in-law was a great relief to Mrs. Wilson. Ed was thirty-five at marriage and his mother had been long worried by the superfluity of what she calls 'the butterfly type' among the young

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things included in his Edellyn house parties and town dinners. He may never realize the ingenuity called into play on those occasions. For instance, his mother's unconventional arrangement of the dinner table from time to time—boys down one side, girls down the other, so no young thing, butterfly or not, could congratulate herself on being on the young host's right hand. Ed did realize, however, the amount of skilful manœuvring done to ensure the success of these parties—to his mother's intense satisfaction he always preferred entertaining his friends in his own home. She was really astonished when a lady with whom she was having lunch in town wondered why she had to hurry home to see that flowers, glass, and silverware were in perfect shape for a batch of young people. 'Why, I bother more about such things for my children's dinner parties than for my own,' she told her quietly.

That was about the only kind of bother Ed or Helen ever did cause her, Mrs. Wilson says. The children confirm it from their angle. Comradely trust between youngsters and parents—'we made pals of our children,' Mr. Wilson says—worked out wonderfully. If something went wrong enough for discipline, 'I'll have to tell daddy about this' was all that was necessary. Mrs. Wilson, thinking it over afterward, usually came to the conclusion that it was more often the parents' than the children's fault anyway, and she cites the sole spanking she ever administered to prove it. Helen, age about eight, had just been given a new tricycle and had crossed a forbidden street to display it to a playmate. Mrs. Wilson bitterly regretted spanking her when she later remembered that she herself had said, without realizing what it would lead to, that Virginia would love to see the new acquisition.

Helen, married to just the right man for her, still consults her father, whose common sense has always

been a cardinal article of faith in the family, about such matters as shifting servants or the children's education. In between came a smooth, logical succession of Chicago private schools, Wellesley for Helen, Princeton for Ed, with a preparatory year at Lawrenceville. Utter harmony survived even that trickiest of moments when, with college over, young men have careers to start. Young Ed went to Europe for a polishing-off summer and then turned up at his father's office down among the stockyard perfumes, and said, 'What about putting me to work?' Up to then nobody had so much as mentioned his going into the family firm. By now he is president of the company, his father staying on as chairman of the board.

Having raised Wilson and Company from a pup, having the additional stimulus of being in love with the meat business, with a fine up-from-scratch history as a person, Tom Wilson is not likely ever to quit business as long as he can stand and see. He even finds it an added attraction to be dealing in perishable goods with a necessity for rapid juggling and ceaseless vigil that would make nervous wrecks out of many businessmen. Family circumstances—his father turned oil driller when he left off farming—made even finishing high school inadvisable. His first job was checking freight cars for the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad at \$50 a month. Presently a man from Morris & Company came round looking for an experienced hand to work on their refrigerator cars. The head clerk, given a chance at the job, came back disgusted—a stockyard was notoriously no ballroom and he was disquieted by the way ice-cold water squirted up his trouser-legs as he negotiated the duckboards in the muddy, smelly yards. In spite of warnings from his boss that six months' experience was far too little, young Tom tried for the post anyway and landed it at \$100 a month.

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Smoothly and soundly and rapidly he rose to be vice-president of Morris & Company. When some New York bankers wanted to make a first-rate outfit out of the Sulzberger Company, another packing firm, Morris & Company's bright young Mr. Wilson got the call. He told them he would get the new company on its feet, stay five years and then step out—to retire, with plenty for the rest of his life. He moved in and not only straightened out the meat business but made a very good thing of a sporting goods business the firm had been doing on the side. All that was thirty years ago and he is still cheerfully unretired.

A standard figure in many ways—a member of the Union League Club, as well as of a dozen others, reading the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* in addition to the Chicago papers, for his golf preferring the one of his several clubs which does not allow ladies on the fairways. But a good deal of imagination has gone into his problem of making the best use of that six-figured income.

Family finances are fortunately simple. Mrs. Wilson draws what she needs out of one end of her Chicago bank account while her husband puts cash into the other without her asking. She never overdraws and neither of them ever mentions the account—except when Mr. Wilson expresses some uneasiness over his impression that 'Bird', as he calls his wife, might spend a little more here or there without hurting anything. That precludes budgeting. Their spending is just a matter of matching goods and services to their generously simple tastes. His tailoring is mouth-wateringly fine. Her country sports clothes are the deceptively simple pastel sort of thing that proves both that no expense was spared and that Elizabeth Foss still retains the eye for quality of material and needlework that she learned from the family dressmaker.



## THE THOMAS E. WILSONS

Spending trouble with the children never appeared—until college neither had an allowance. In college each had a bank account along the same lines as mother's, and it worked fine.

Thriftily as Mrs. Wilson handles the two big houses, their upkeep amounts to about 20 per cent of the Wilson income. Taxes, including income taxes, take almost as much more—16 per cent. And a huge proportion of the balance—29 per cent in the average year—is given away to good causes. Red Cross, for instance—Mr. Wilson was stockyards chairman this year and took the war-relief fund soaring way above their quota. Pew and contributions at the Kenwood Evangelical Church on the South Side are kept up regularly, although Mr. Wilson seldom attends because Sunday usually finds him at Edellyn. But his pet good cause, like his shorthorns and his cattle ranch, is tied in with the meat business. During most of the history of the 4-H Club movement among farm boys and girls, Thomas E. Wilson has been combination patron saint and Lady Bountiful for the cattle-breeding end.

It all began back in 1916 when Secretary of Agriculture Meredith asked five or six Chicago businessmen to step in and give a shot in the arm to 4-H, which the government had been running somewhat limply for two years. When Meredith died, Tom Wilson was made national chairman. Seven youngsters attended the first club congress in Chicago. Now each year from all over the nation come 1,400 young enthusiasts who have been lovingly feeding calves for showing in 4-H competitions, in county, state, or nation—and so learning a good deal more than their fathers about cattle care—aiming at gold medals, watches and \$300 agricultural scholarships donated out of Thomas E. Wilson's own pocket. Mr. Wilson also personally foots the bill for a big dinner and show for them at the

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Wilson plant. It isn't all cold philanthropy, of course. He has a royal good time talking feed and breed and points to these youngsters. One of his dearest possessions—rating right along with Browndale Count's purple ribbons—is a stack of scrapbooks carefully preserving the grateful letters written him by 4-H winners.

'I try to concentrate my giving on young folks,' he says, 'I figure that makes more sense.' In consequence of which sound doctrine, he was recently awarded the Rosenberger Medal of the University of Chicago—an honour given in the past to such figures as Sir Frederick Banting, the discoverer of insulin, and Dr. Joseph De Lee, the greatest of American obstetricians.

Youngsters are a lot on his mind and always fruitfully. The other day he recalled that young Ed's pony had first appeared when the boy was ten and it was high time for Helen's little girl to have the same experience. On his rounds of the farm that evening—as soon as he gets out from town, he does his checking up before dinner—he dropped in on one of the farmers way over on the other side of the place:

'Didn't we send a pony over here to pasture couple of years ago?' Pony still there, fat and sassy. 'My wife's made kind of a pet out of him,' said the farmer diffidently; 'She'd never forgive me if he was taken away and anything happened to him.' Mr. Wilson rubbed the pony's nose and pictured in his mind's eye the way small Noel Ann Williams, eight and impish, would look on that plump back. 'Don't you worry,' he said, with a grin that the office boys admire so. 'This pony is going to be in good hands.'

*The*  
**J. R. BLAIRS**  
*of St. Petersburg, Florida*

**H**IBISCUS and bougainvillæa are not the only things that blossom out spectacularly in St. Petersburg sunshine. Under its genial influence lifelong dreams come true, new ambitions shyly sprout and are promptly realized. People of sixty-odd find themselves playing new games, taking up new activities, acting like people in a new world. It's not only the place to do what you always wanted to, but the place that starts you doing a whole host of things you'd never known you wanted to—till, with retirement, the chance came along.

Take Mrs. J. R. Blair, late of Charleston, Illinois, out in a small boat hauling in fish on a hand line, regardless of sunburn or the ladylike traditions of her girlhood. Or Jonas Russin Blair himself, mixing concrete for a homemade addition to the front steps and finding that, in spite of a lifelong conviction that he was clumsy with his hands, he can make a good job of it. Surveying his handiwork he says with a grin that there's no doubt of that being the best doggone porch he ever made in his life and, now he's discovered he's a good workman, he's going right on to build some extra storage place for all that junk collecting in the garage. Illinois is eight hundred miles as the crow flies from Tampa Bay. The Blairs feel it is even farther than that between the teeming responsibilities they had at home—he was a manufacturer of roofing and waterproofing while she reared a family single-handed in a rambling three-story house—and the go-as-you-please amenities of their slick little Spanish-style cottage at 681 64th Avenue South, St. Petersburg.

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The very name over the front door stresses the point: 'Far-Away-House,' it says. The present even tenor of their lives is best symbolized by the still waters of the two fishpools in the garden and the stately serenity of the two tall pines near by with flame vines creeping up their trunks. The entire little white house is not as big as the combined living-room and sun porch of the old Charleston house—and suits the Blairs all the better on that account.

Mr. Blair fretted when he first cut loose and left the business for his two sons to run. It's often a wrench for a hard worker to get his nose off the grindstone after so many years, and the whole Blair family is grindstone minded. Mr. and Mrs. Blair were eager for all three children to finish college. But, after two years apiece at the University of Illinois, first Max and later Donald came to father and insisted on being allowed to go into the business. Daughter Dorothy, the only one to march up the aisle and get her degree, is now an enthusiastic assistant of her husband in the asbestos-manufacturing business, and successfully raising three sons at the same time. The first year of Mr. Blair's retirement the boys sent him a frantic SOS and he scrambled back from Florida to straighten them out. But that taught all of them a lesson. Nowadays he wouldn't respond to such a call, nor would his sons utter it. Some of their ideas, Mr. Blair says, have turned out better than any he would have had—although he would never admit as much to them.

Every August Mr. and Mrs. Blair drive back to Charleston for a six or eight weeks' visit to their old friends, a trip that is one of the most enjoyable and delightful periods of the year for them and to which they look forward eagerly. Every Christmas the two boys and their wives, Dorothy and her husband and the five assorted



Mr. and Mrs.  
J. R. Blair,  
now of St.  
Petersburg,  
enjoy a rubber  
of bridge un-  
der the Florida  
palms. Both  
are eager  
fishermen.





The fish that the Blairs are so fond of catching form a frequent and popular feature on their menus.



The five-room Spanish house which Mr. Blair bought for \$1,950. Its attractive design is well suited to the sunny and mellow Florida climate.

grandchildren—the first granddaughter appeared just last winter—come down to Florida. For that occasion Mrs. Blair solicitously prepares her Christmas specialities, just as she always did in the old days—the special Christmas cake made with coffee for liquid instead of milk or water and the even more special Christmas sweet, uncooked and with tinted mashed potatoes as the base. Back when they were spending only half the year in St. Petersburg, Mrs. Blair says, ‘We just existed till we could get back south.’ Now their emancipation is complete.

They began looking for a better winter climate thirteen years ago. Mrs. Blair’s brother had spent several years in St. Petersburg and praised it to the skies, but they also had friends who said there was no place like California . . . The Blairs thought they’d try one state one year, the other the next. Florida was first and they never got to California. Then one time they tried the St. Petersburg summer in an all-year-round experiment. That decided them. In 1935 they cut all moorings and bought the house, bringing a few cherished possessions from Charleston but buying the bulk of the furniture down there.

‘I was filling a job I didn’t need,’ says Mr. Blair, ‘and it just wasn’t making sense my standing in other people’s way.’ This Scottish-extracted, white-haired, chuckling practitioner of the art of cultivating one’s own garden has a solid streak of personal realism. One of the best things that ever happened to him, he says, was having to spend a jobless month when he was just a youngster trying to get along. ‘Teaches you a lot. Nobody’s ever heard me make that speech about how all the unemployed could find jobs if they really wanted them.’

For this businessman, however, retirement does not mean suppressing his instinct for canny dealing. He remains a smart negotiator, just as he remains a die-hard Democrat. As he looks around his compact, handsome

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house—five rooms, as up to date as you please and within gunshot of the water—he says, grinning, he's half ashamed of himself for the price he paid for it, \$1,950, with a down payment of only \$250. When he wanted a boat he found himself a fifteen-footer with an outboard motor for \$55, which he lends to the dockman on Sundays, and at other times when he and Mrs. Blair don't need it. But when the boat is not in use, Mr. Blair, in characteristic thrifty fashion, takes the motor home. As a veteran of country stores—he was a \$5-a-week store clerk when he married—he takes both pride and expert pleasure in getting the most for the family dollar. Mrs. Blair supplies the daily grocery list but Mr. Blair does all the purchasing himself and any corner grocery with an ambition to get ahead of him will have to get up very early in the morning.

Even his fishing is turned to economic account. Fresh Florida fish that you catch yourself are not only a help with the food budget but mighty good eating and a prime favourite with guests from up north. Mackerel run thick thereabouts in season. Mr. Blair has caught as many as 115 in a four-hour session. Then he salts them down, so efficiently that he has yet to have a fish spoil, and has only pity for anybody who doesn't think prime salt mackerel a treat. His sons agree with him—a keg of father's salting always goes back with them to Charleston when they come down for Christmas.

Pennies count with the Blairs, too, because they are living on \$100 a month. When they moved to St. Petersburg in 1935, they accepted a sort of challenge from their friends back home about their ability to live so cheaply, and they made arrangements with their two boys to collect their income, make them a full monthly report of it, but to send them only \$100 a month of the total. And, until it was all cleared up, \$25 of that went toward



payments on the house. They figure that a dollar a day will feed both of them well.

Their car, a 1938 Chevrolet sedan, was a present from the boys two years ago, totally unexpected and warmly welcomed. The annual round trip to Charleston is managed on \$35 for petrol, oil, tourist camps, and supplies, plus some odds and ends as presents for the grandchildren. Ten dollars a month covers gas, electricity, and water, including the operation of the gas water-heater. Heavy laundry comes to \$50 a year, with Mrs. Blair doing the small pieces herself. They neither have nor need a telephone. Medical and dental expenses come to about \$5 monthly. The financial pushing around Mr. Blair took during the depression forced him to drop his ample life insurance and all he carries now is a \$5-a-month policy to cover the funeral emergency. He is still paying off some liabilities from that nightmare period with the revenue from odd assets in Charleston. When the pay-off is finished the monthly income will be a good deal larger, but in the meantime they are doing very well indeed, thank you.

Fifteen years' acquaintance with the place has taught the Blairs just what they want among St. Petersburg's attractions. For a while they went regularly to the Illinois Society and had the intriguing experience, common there, of making friends with folks from their own home town that they'd never even heard of. Up north you aren't likely to meet somebody who develops into your best friend by living briefly in the same apartment house, as Mrs. Blair did. Mr. Blair is a devotee of the Sunshine Recreation Club—that famous institution where crowds of highly competitive oldsters pit themselves against each other at shuffleboard and horseshoe pitching and get quite as much sport as their grandsons do out of tennis and high diving. (One of the town's most

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characteristic sights is an elderly couple returning from the shuffleboard wars with their bamboo-shafted cues stavewise in their hands.) Dues at the Sunshine are \$2.50 a year. Their one movie each month is picked with studious care to be sure it's something they both want to see.

With cheerful common sense the Blairs substitute an informal invitation to their local friends to 'just drop in and be one of us' for the parties they can't afford. Each summer they become part of a rotating arrangement in which their contemporaries from Ohio and Colorado and York State play bridge three nights a week at each other's houses with root beer and cookies for refreshments. In winter, however, the ring breaks up because everybody—the Blairs included—is too busy entertaining visitors from back home. From November to April the dainty double guest-room at the Blairs' is never empty and a good cold spell up north sees the little house stretch magically to accommodate three more—two on the studio couch in the living room, one on the sofa in the sun porch. It is, and always has been, a custom with the Blairs that they are rather proud of, to make their guests feel at home. If at any time a visitor wants to go to the kitchen and help cook a meal, set the table, or dry the dishes it only adds to the fun. 'We never make company of them,' Mrs. Blair says. 'And it's a mistake to think that their presence is an "unbearable strain" on the budget. It's not, and never has been.'

She and Jonas have always been fond of having lots of people around. The big old house back in Charleston used to bulge with the children's friends and the kind of hospitality that kept them coming. Up in the attic was one room set aside as a boys' club and another sacred to Dorothy's friends. When Mrs. Blair's architect father remodelled the old house, a basement workroom

for the development of hobbies was installed and so earnestly appreciated that grown-up Donald is still an ardent model-railroad fan and Max fools skilfully with a camera in his spare time. When the children came home at week-ends from college, they naturally had many friends in tow. Mrs. Blair, doing all her own work and for long periods the laundry too, had her hands full and to spare—but 'They were always welcome,' she says; 'I wanted my children to have that kind of memory of their home. And I'm so happy now I did it.' In this cheerfully elastic household nothing was thought of making room for one more. There was Mr. Blair's little niece whose mother died in the 1918 flu epidemic to be taken in for four years. There was Max's college friend who came for a short visit—and stayed three years.

This gracious, energetic little lady has richly earned the right to nibble all the lotus leaves she wants, but rocking chairs and palm-leaf fans are not the right kind. She has become an enthusiastic and formidable deep-water fisherman and is rejoicing in the discovery that, except for cooking, her housework in these compact surroundings and this miraculous climate takes only two hours a day. That leaves plenty of time for fishing and for some of the other things she has ached to do. Years ago in Charleston she took six lessons in china painting and then had to drop it. Now there is nothing whatever to prevent her from filling the house with bits of bright colour that are the work of her own hands. She has even tried a few oil paintings which her admiring family carry off at Christmas. She has time to search the magazines for the bits of verse she likes to paste up in her big scrapbook. When visitors are thick she combs the magazines further for intriguing, inexpensive dishes and sample menus with which she can plan her meals ahead. She can wander to her heart's content in St. Petersburg's mammoth

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ten-cent stores, which have always had a fairyland charm for her—Jonas teases her about this, but she doesn't mind a bit. For she has her own little joke on him. On those occasions when he insists on drying the dishes, she is duly grateful but afterwards sneaks out to the kitchen to finish off a somewhat sketchy job. Not for worlds, however, would she let him catch her at it.

Her large-scale hobby—dressmaking—is even more practical than his mackerel fishing. Doing her own expert cutting and sewing enables her to afford much better material and a much better fit for her trim, short-waisted figure than she could hope for in a local ready-made dress. For all its economy, however, a new dress is a creative adventure too—a long search for just the pattern she wants, long meditation on just the variations her own personal taste suggests, the craftsmanlike satisfaction of tinkering with tricky detail and the line that must fall just so—and the final try-on with Jonas puffing at his pipe and wondering out loud how she manages to make everything suit her right down to the ground.

Jonas is sixty-five now and Myrtle is sixty-three, for all her bustle and cheery volubility. Many things are different from those early days in Charleston. The reason they don't dance, for instance, is that, dancing having been just plain sinful when they were young, they never learned how. But they do enjoy their bridge hugely, even though cards once came under the same ban. Mr. Blair remembers how broad-minded he felt the time when he found his two boys and some other lads fearfully playing cards in the haymow, and he told them, if they had to play at all, they'd better come and do it in the house where they'd be more comfortable.

The Blairs were gentle, commonsensical parents who seem to have got grand results in fruitful relations with their children. Spanking was abandoned when the children

were quite young. The milder punishments and patient reasoning out of each problem as it came along were substituted and worked with remarkably few hitches. Still, Mrs. Blair says she thoroughly envies the modern mother all the expert help in child rearing that books and magazines and special college courses, such as Dorothy took, now give. It simply floors her, she adds, to see the efficient way her daughter handles those three boys of hers.

The church was the centre of social life when the Blairs were young. Jonas first met Myrtle Maxwell at a church sociable—a ‘mum sociable’ in fact, where the girls were supposed to keep absolutely quiet and the boys worked all the evening to make them talk. It was a young stranger in town named Blair who broke Myrtle’s silence with unexpected speed—and the grin he did it with was probably the reason she married him, she says. He still has that grin, wide, infectious and extraordinarily becoming.

Back in Charleston the Blairs were both active in the Presbyterian Church. He was Sunday-school superintendent in his time, she taught a class and had played the organ as a girl. In St. Petersburg they attend church pretty regularly, Baptist or Presbyterian, depending on which of their friends they are going with that Sunday. But they have not transferred their membership from Charleston and are not active except for modest contributions to the plate when it comes round. ‘It’s this way,’ says Mr. Blair, ‘we figure we’ve done our share already—and I think we have. So these days we’ve just lain back in harness.’

That’s about the size of it. The whistle blows at the little roofing factory in Charleston but Jonas Blair doesn’t hear it. Charleston children are marching off to school but Myrtle Blair’s youngsters don’t have to be there on

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time with their oatmeal warm inside them. The one thing that best dramatizes their situation for the Blairs is the fact that they can get up when they please and breakfast when they please and, if it works out that noonday dinner is impracticable, eat a sandwich and let it go at that. It was an interesting and a challenging road, but a long one—and it had a turning at last.

### *The BLAIRS' Budget*

<i>Food (about \$1 a day)</i>	\$360·00
<i>Car (upkeep and insurance)</i>	120·00
<i>Taxes (property)</i>	25·00
<i>Payments on house (\$25 a month)</i>	300·00
<i>Church contributions</i>	5·00
<i>Clothes</i>	75·00
<i>Laundry</i>	50·00
<i>Gas, electricity, water</i>	120·00
<i>Medical and dentists' bills</i>	60·00
<i>Recreation (including annual trip to Illinois)</i>	50·00
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	35·00
	<hr/>
	\$1,200·00

*The*  
**HEARCLITE GEORGES**  
*of St. Petersburg, Florida*

LATE in 1938 Hearclite George, a Chicago yardmaster with the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad, reached the retirement age of sixty-five and began to draw the \$118-a-month pension that had been piling up for him under government supervision. Both he and Winifred, his wife, knew precisely what to do next. They bought a 1938 Studebaker Commander sedan second-hand for \$920 cash out of savings; Mr. George, who had never owned or driven a car before, took two lessons in gear shifting from the man who sold him the car; and off they started for Florida. Mrs. George, who had also just turned sixty-five, had been warned by her doctor that this long and chancy motor trip might be disastrous to her health. But that didn't stop her for one minute from climbing in confidently beside her husband and proving the doctor gratifyingly wrong.

When they started for Florida, their plans were sportingly vague. They put up in a St. Petersburg boarding-house, figuring on a stay of perhaps a couple of months. Then one day as they were driving slowly about one of St. Petersburg's newer streets, Mr. George stepped sharply on the brake, and pointed. 'There's your house,' he said. It was a neat, new little white house, just like one in the outskirts of Chicago that had caught Winnie's bright blue eye years before. Bedroom, living-room, breakfast nook, kitchen, garage—already complete with little orange, grapefruit, avocado trees, and a couple of Australian pines actually growing in the backyard to make it even nicer than the one Winnie had coveted in

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Chicago.. A down payment of £1,500 made it theirs, furniture and all. After nearly two years in it they are still fluttering with pride over every detail.

'They' fits the Georges far better than 'he and she'. They do everything together—bathing at the Gulf beaches across the peninsula, housework, grocery shopping, as rapturously as if it all were—as it is—a second honeymoon. She helps him choose his neckties and he gravely purchases all her silk stockings, never making a mistake in colour, weight or size. Hanging in her neat little closet is a pair of giddy lounging pyjamas—black satin with a shamrock-green top—that he saw advertised in a newspaper and made her send for. So far she has only dared wear them once—in a Pullman car—but she is gigglingly working up her courage to put them on one evening at home as he wants her to.

Perhaps the greatest kick Mr. George has yet got out of his new financial independence came last winter when he saw in a window a 'doll's hat' that would just suit Winnie, marched in and paid \$12.50 for it and took it triumphantly to her. The frivolous little scrap of black straw and pink flowers is, as Mr. George guessed, very trickily becoming, perched on Winnie's white hair. She scolded him a little when she wormed the shocking price out of him, but it was a poor antidote for the proud jubilation in his eye when she put it on.

The presiding genius of the American melting pot must feel highly gratified by this absolute blending of personalities. Mr. George was born in the Polish section of Chicago, son of a Greek father who was, among other things, a sailor on the old-time Great Lake schooners, shipwrecked five times in the pursuit of this occupation. His grandfather was a Greek Orthodox priest, his mother French. Plump, ruddy, and with an inextinguishable air of well-being, he looks precisely like the most





Look for the happiest couple on the St. Petersburg beach if you want to meet the Hearclite Georges. They live on his \$118-a-month pension from the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, and Pacific Railroad.



Mrs. George was shocked as well as pleased when her husband saw this \$12.50 hat (top left) in a shop window and brought it home to her. The Georges' romance started in a kitchen and he still helps with the dishes. They bought their house by monthly payments for \$2,950.

## THE HEARCLITE GEORGES

genial type of French bourgeois. Winifred Clare George was born in County Clare, Ireland—she likes to say the county was named after the girl. A cousin engaged in domestic service in Lawrence, Massachusetts, brought her over when she was only twelve years old. For some fantastic reason she has lost most of her brogue while her husband has acquired it, until he sounds far the more Irish of the two. But Winnie is still Irish enough to turn a few steps of a jig when 'The Green Fields of America' strikes up on the radio and to get blazingly indignant over executions of Irish Republican Army bomb conspirators.

Winnie attended a parochial school in Lawrence for several years but, when she was fifteen, left school and went into domestic service, too. Mr. George and she are 'twins in almost everything', as Winnie says. Simultaneously his mother, left a widow with six sons and five daughters when her husband died in a varnish factory fire, was coaxing a job as watchman at an old-fashioned gate crossing on the Chicago and North-Western Railroad for her fifteen-year-old son. Until that sixty-fifth birthday retired him, he was never afterward out of some kind of job. Mostly railroading, but with one sizable interval—after the big Debs railroad strike in 1894—of doing anything and everything that came along, including firing boilers on a lake boat and a job as an ice-man.

In a certain kitchen in Lake Forest, prosperous Chicago suburb, this ice-man found his eye immensely taken by a young Irish cook who was, he says, 'jolly and a good-looker with a pretty shape.' Both were twenty-six at the time and Winnie was already a widow with a small son and a small daughter boarded out near her job. But the concept 'stepchildren' just won't fit this picture. In unconscious proof of this, Winnie calls her husband Pa, and there is an admiring glow in her quick voice

when she says he was a better father to those youngsters than most actual fathers could ever hope to be.

At the time of their marriage a year later, George was back in railroading as a switchman for the line that has just retired him after forty years of steady service. The pair shyly picked seven-thirty a.m. as the most inconspicuous hour of the day for a wedding, only to find they had drawn a large audience of gaping children on bicycles. The little family went to live in the five-room upper half of a two-family flat building and from then on Winnie's domestic talents were strictly reserved for home consumption. Mr. George was doing night work at \$70 a month and they had no nest egg. But \$10 a month paid for the apartment, with a nice backyard thrown in for the youngsters, and Winnie was a wonder at pinching pennies with tireless good nature.

As her husband steadily rose up the railroad ladder to the \$328-a-month job he had on retiring, she stayed by the apartment to make sure a hot supper was right on the dot when he came home, and laughed away the neighbours who wanted her to leave the dishes in the sink and go out gallivanting. When he was on the night shift and needed quiet for daytime sleep, she always kept the children in the park after school and did all the housework, including quantities of expert canning, at night. Four hours of sleep was always plenty for her, she says. Even now she can't begin to understand how presumably good wives she meets down there can endure going on long trips back north without their husbands. For her it would be like leaving the crucial half of herself behind.

They have had their troubles. Their boy died. Mr. George still has a slight limp, in memory of being run over by a boxcar in the yards. Seven years ago a ruptured appendix laid him low and the doctors said they didn't

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dare operate on a man of sixty. But Winnie, knowing the stamina of the man she had married, said go ahead, and saw him come out of the lethal shadow of peritonitis so brilliantly that now, at sixty-seven, he doesn't look a day over fifty-five. Back during the depression in 1932 a brother of Mr. George's lost his job and got in a financial jam. Mr. George staked him and his entire family to a year's living expenses and got him back on his feet. It was an expensive way to do the job, of course. But it never would have occurred to the Georges to join forces with another family in a single establishment while there was any other way out. Noover lapping of households has ever menaced their unity.

This concept of family unity has also been impressed on daughter Mary, now married to a steady-going railroad switchman and mother of three fine children. Much credit for the happiness of that marriage goes to Mrs. George. In the post-honeymoon difficulties, 'I always took the boy's part,' she says, smiling shrewdly, making it clear that running home to weep on mother's shoulder instead of working it out between the two of them was strictly discouraged. Mrs. George detests mother-in-law jokes, and, applied to her, they would certainly fall flat. But she must have had a good deal of reorientation to do when her daughter got married. Back in Chicago she and Mary had been so inseparable that whenever Mary did appear in public alone everyone always asked quite naturally, 'Why, where's your mother?' Mary is still a big baby, according to Mrs. George—cried when she and her husband had to go back to Chicago after their Christmas visit last year.

Between tastes that were simple to begin with and the economic advantages of Florida, the Georges float buoyantly on their \$118 a month. Most of it can go to living expenses, because they already had \$3,000 in saved

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cash to buy their car, to make a large down payment on the total cost of \$2,950 for house and furniture, and still have \$1,000 as a rainy-day fund. Out of the monthly cheque \$27 goes to pay off on the house. Upkeep on the car is low because they use it only for going downtown and over to the beach. A hundred a year easily takes care of clothes because, on leaving Chicago, they were already well turned out and the Florida climate keeps expensive replacements at minimum. A first fur coat, to match a first car, that Mrs. George bought just before they came south is a possession to be joyfully proud of but not to wear often in the mild St. Petersburg air. The rest of her retirement trousseau will last Winnie for years too, since she spends most of the day in tastefully chosen house dresses.

Two permanent waves a year come to \$10 and in between she dresses her pretty white hair herself with becoming softness. Their chief recreation is bathing—that costs you nothing when you wear your bathing suit under your clothes in the car. Winnie has always been crazy about splashing about in the water ever since, as a child in Ireland, she was pitched in and, instead of being frightened, took to it like a little duck. Mr. George himself tends to all lawn mowing and divers potterings about the place. So the accounts he keeps with rail-roading precision leave plenty of room for giving the church as much as devout Catholics like to, an occasional movie, and sending out enough laundry to keep it from being a chore, now that arthritis is bothering Mrs. George a little.

Precisely \$30 comes out of the cheque for the coming month's food. Meat and staples, Mrs. George figures, cost about the same as in Chicago. A dollar a day turns the trick without skimping because fruit in Florida is, of course, even cheaper than vegetables. Five cents'

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worth of oranges give enough juice to fill an eight-ounce glass. Then the Georges are very fond of fish and Florida fish are epicurean treats costing little. Breakfast is grapefruit and a hot cereal and three-minute eggs with Brookfield sausages for a Saturday and Sunday special treat. Supper is toast and cheese and stewed fruit. Midday dinner is the big meal in a hearty tradition that culminates on Sunday with boiled ham and cabbage and potatoes, topped off with an apple pie made with all the skill of a quondam professional cook and appreciated with all the ardour of a husband trained in good eating for forty-one years.

Since Pa is always along when Winnie is buying supplies, he is also expert on what things cost and thoroughly endorses her two major purchasing principles: (1) buy in sales wherever possible and (2) always take advantage of large package savings. Years and years ago he found that Winnie was an admirable steward of family running expenses. She has no use for buying on credit and says proudly that no bill collector ever so much as laid eyes on her door. They have always managed to pay on the nail for medical expenses too.

Mr. George enjoys taking a hand in the household. Winnie teases him a little because he has to let her boil those eggs to make sure they are the three-minute kind he wants. But coffee, oatmeal, and toast he can and does prepare as efficiently as any woman. He vacuums the house with skill and persistence and occasionally does some of the heavy washing in the garage on a special bench he constructed for the purpose. Good exercise, he says, grinning down at his still brawny forearms. Housework is on the light side both because the Georges are well equipped with vacuum and electric iron and electric refrigerator and because things have eased up in general.

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No more serious canning and baking—just the apple pies and an occasional pan of biscuits nowadays—no more child tending and dressmaking and, best of all, no more daily separation. St. Petersburg, too, is infinitely cleaner than coal-heated northern cities. Even with scrubbing the kitchen floor by hand—Mrs. George doesn't believe in mops—the daily round of housework takes only about an hour, including washing the breakfast dishes. She is still happily commenting that the modern white-leather chair and the blond-wood desk they bought to dress up the living room would have been unthinkable in grimy Chicago.

They brought along their own silver and linen and electrical paraphernalia too, and put up Venetian blinds and cheery chintz curtains and covered the chairs to match, heightening the sunny lightness and newly-wed effect inside the little white house. On the living room walls hang pictures of Our Lord and the Pope and a group photograph of a big dinner attended by all employees of the Milwaukee Road who had been on the payroll over twenty-five years—the evening gown Mrs. George wore for that occasion has now been cut off to make a highly successful afternoon dress. On the desk a Christmas card for Mr. George signed by thirty-odd of the boys from the freight yard. Copies of the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Chicago Daily News* lie about—Mr. George frequently buys them downtown, not because he is homesick but because he has always earnestly read those papers' first-rate foreign correspondence. But that is about all the reading they get done. They used to take the *Ladies' Home Journal*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Collier's* and the *Reader's Digest*. But nowadays when the chores are done they're outdoors all the time in daylight, and at night Charlie McCarthy and Lowell Thomas and Fibber McGee come in over the \$9.98 radio they are



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getting so much more kick out of than they did out of the \$360 one back in Chicago.

They never miss Mr. Roosevelt on the air. And Mr. George is as devoted an admirer as Mrs. Roosevelt has. 'I tell you,' he says, 'she's a grand lady and there's absolutely nothing stuck up about *her*. No, sir!'

The Georges have done little mixing in the clubbier aspect of St. Petersburg. They never mixed much around in Chicago either—maybe a friend dropping in now and then for a sandwich and a glass of beer. So many years of night work and never seeing enough of each other until now didn't predispose them toward outside social life. Winnie doesn't like cards, although Pa, in his younger days, was well acquainted with poker and high-low-jack. They don't go to the movies often—Mr. George doesn't like to drive at night—but chances are that the movie a month they do get to will have something Irish about it somehow. Mrs. George used to watch closely for pictures with the late Alice Brady in them.

There's that daily swim when the thermometer permits, which is a lot of the year. And Mass every Sunday. Mr. George's mother brought him up devoutly in the Greek Orthodox church and, when he married Winnie, he switched over to the Roman Catholic. Catholic programmes on the radio are eagerly looked forward to, but not Father Coughlin any more. He got much too radical, Mr. George says.

The Georges don't find it lonely. They have a genius for luxuriating in being together.

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### *The GEORGES' Budget*

<i>Food</i> (about \$1 a day)	\$360·00
<i>Car</i> (upkeep and insurance)	126·00
<i>Taxes</i> (real estate, car registration)	60·00
<i>Payments on house</i> (\$27 a month)	324·00
<i>Contributions</i> (church, charities)	75·00
<i>Clothes</i>	120·00
<i>Laundry</i>	84·00
<i>Heat, light, water, gas</i>	84·00
<i>Life insurance</i>	156·00
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	27·00
	<hr/>
	\$1,416·00

## FINAL REPORT

WHEN the idea of the 'How America Lives' series was being planned out around a large table, the wife of one of the editors expressed certain misgivings.

'From our point of view it's a wonderful idea,' she said, 'but what I want to know is, how much personal damage will it do these people to be descended on and pictured and described so conspicuously all over the United States?'

After the series had already started in print, a reader wrote in with the same idea from the brighter side, suggesting that the families be followed up at regular intervals for ever and ever! An intriguing idea but impracticable. We were already a little conscience-stricken about the good nature with which our chosen families allowed strangers to turn their homes and daily lives inside out for the several days needed for each survey.

It may have been mere luck in finding families blessed with unusual levelheadedness, but so far there are few signs that the freshet of publicity implied in a circulation of three and a half millions has done much damage. The Kriebels did have a perplexing time with a female crank who telephoned Walt at his office eleven times running the morning the family appeared on the news-stands, and life-insurance agents naturally leaped to the telephone and pestered all and sundry. But the more dismal possibilities nobly failed to appear. The Griffins, first to take the chance, reported firmly: 'There hasn't been a word of kidding from anybody'—And that is the verdict all round.

Nor was there much to regret in the mail that poured in on the families delineated. Begging letters should

have been a certainty—they hardly appeared at all. Cranks were almost equally rare; only a few being moved to action. But there was a plenitude of nice letters, from Wild Rose, Wisconsin; Mountain Air, New Mexico; Waterproof, Louisiana; Deadwood, South Dakota; Egypt, Texas; Wrangel, Alaska—from New York, Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City, Philadelphia, San Francisco. The Kriebels' bag, for instance, included mail from twenty-five states of the Union, Canada, Alaska, and Brazil. A package from Brazil addressed to the Wrights proved to contain a job lot of exotic nuts.

Letters from homesick people, reminded so irresistibly of what it was like to grow up in Burlington or Dallas that they had to sit down and write a letter about it. And there were letters from people who were just feeling chatty and a little lonesome, people who wanted to swap experiences in budget juggling, people with the impulse to tell others in the same situation as themselves just how they were getting on. The warm and friendly interest reflected was generously summed up by a letter to the editors from a mid-western reader, who takes her dog out walking in the evenings after supper. 'I pass house after house,' she wrote, 'some dark, some with lights shining through closely drawn blinds. Once in a while I pass a house where the blinds are up and I can see the life within. It seems to me that they are just like the families in your *How America Lives*.'

There was something particularly warming about the way readers responded to the plight of hard-luck families. Our New York editorial offices began to get calls demanding the O'Briens' address and some idea of whether they could use some shoes for the kids or a practically brand-new crib for the baby. There was an even greater effort to do something substantial for the Braceys. So many people asked where to send them

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clothes, toys, food, and so forth that their offers had to be diverted to the county welfare office in Vicksburg in order that this flood of generosity might spread over several other families in the same boat. Budgeting, always a sore and intimate subject, early proved to carry the greatest interest. Occasionally the question of where the money goes produced a good deal of indignation. The Griffins' dollar a day for food was praised, stormed at, frankly disbelieved in, sometimes even decried as lavish, particularly by a calm lady who was justifiably proud of feeding a husband and three children so intelligently on a total income of \$1,000 a year that all three kids had won championship county health awards. Throughout was reflected the American woman's hankering to do the best possible job with the resources she has available, and her uneasy and almost pathetic suspicion that she could do better if she only knew how. Often and often they wrote for help, spurred by the account of what others could and did do.

Elsewhere the articles had become propaganda, with definite effect on readers' actual lives. One woman wrote that the Cases' pluck and mother wit had finally encouraged her and her husband to take the bit in their teeth and start building their dream-house. A young girl stated her intention of hammering her boy friend over the head with the example of Ted and Virginia Chase until he got over his idea that they couldn't get married till they'd saved \$1,000. Several husbands or wives, reading and pondering such shrewd spending as that of the Cases, reported that it had been extremely salutary for the other half of the marriage to realize that he or she was doing better or perhaps worse than either of them had realized.

Lots of people wrote in to suggest that they also would like similarly to be surveyed. Surprisingly few of them were actuated by obvious ulterior motives. Of strict

publicity seeking there was none. Some did assume—and it was quite untrue—that the families were paid for their services. ‘My own life,’ wrote one lady, ‘has been so interesting that I am wondering if it wouldn’t make a good story for your series. Frankly, I am making this offer because we are very short of money, and I am sure you pay for such interviews, don’t you? Otherwise, I would in no way care to have my life spread out before the public.’ She was a rare type. Most of the others had just been moved and pleased to think quite honestly that there might be as great or greater value in describing how they, too, lived.

Frequently somebody would recommend as subject, not her own family, but the family down the road or across the way, folks who, with little money and much courage, had shown the whole neighbourhood how to keep the chin up while making do. There are a lot of chins up in the United States, and lots of neighbourly good feeling. ‘Why not do some amateur farmers like me and my husband,’ one letter wanted to know—‘we’re city-bred and trying to make a go of country living since the depression. Between gumption and hard work we’re beginning to do all right.’ Frankly and freely they were offering to share experience and troubles and triumphs with their millions of unknown neighbours. Pride and hope and sense of struggle mingled curiously as they wrote in pen, pencil, or on a typewriter, on office stationery, lined tablets, expensive notepaper, and licked all the different varieties of three-cent stamps that Postmaster Farley happened to have on sale at the moment. Their attitude was in contrast with that of the families actually surveyed, several of whom were blankly unable to understand how it was possible that half a dozen busy people should travel most of the way across the continent solely to find out how much it cost Mrs. So-and-so to get dinner for

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a family of five and to take pictures of her in the act.

It should go without saying that not all the mail was such pleasant reading for editors and staff. Many complaints originated in failure to understand that the scheme of the series was not to strike the average family every time, but rather to cover ways of life representing income brackets all the way up and down the line. If that had been better understood it would have produced less protest when, after the relatively modest circumstances of the Griffins and the Chases, the Guthries' elegant comforts appeared at full length in pictures and print. 'For goodness' sake,' wrote one irate reader, 'start giving the other side of the picture before there is a revolution'—and told of a young girl she knew who, having carefully studied the subject of how well the Guthries do themselves, went and joined the Communist Party!

J. C. FURNAS





## AMERICA'S HOUSEKEEPING

**J**UST what is this job America's housewives do so willingly? It's getting meals—over 1,000 a year for each of them; washing dishes—over six tons a year per family; and making beds, at least 350 to 1,000 a year. It's cleaning the house, with its 1 to 2 thousand square feet of floor space; washing, ironing and mending between 20 and 30 pounds of clothes a week; taking care of the small children—bathing and feeding them, settling their quarrels—doing it over and over again, playing games with them, reading to them, getting up parties on birthdays, mending torn playsuits, bandaging cuts and bruises, mending hurt feelings as well as hurt fingers, trying to be cheerful when husband gets home at night (even if the day has been discouraging). It's also a man and a woman making a home together, making plans for a new house, watching over the children, enjoying their first steps, their first words, their good marks at school, helping them with problems in arithmetic they can't master, comforting daughter who was unable to make a date she wanted so much, squeezing out money for a cornet for son whose greatest ambition is to play in the school band—and enduring his practice hours. All these things and more apparently make up for the hard days, lack of money, the worries and the work. These are the things that the women of America feel make being a housewife worth while.

In hours of work it's impressive. In homes where the mother of small children has no help, she works 50, 60, or more hours a week—and 24 hours a day, 7 days a week she is 'on call' when the children are little. (Grandmother's hours were nearly a hundred, though!) No union

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hours, these. As the children grow up, hours of work lessen—even come down to almost a part-time job in families of two. But it's not hard work on the whole because America's homes are the best in the world, with the most modern equipment.

Just what does she do on an average day, this Mrs. America? She has no help with her housework—95 per cent of American women don't—and she has little money with which to take care of her family. (Nearly two-thirds of American families fall into the \$1,000 to \$3,000 a year income groups.) The chances are she has two children. If they are still small—one at home, about four years old, and one in school, about seven or so—she is a busy woman. It's likely that her day starts at 7 o'clock in the morning. If she's a farm wife, the light in her kitchen window will be shining brightly before daybreak in autumn and winter months, as in the Handevids' home in Minnesota. And in the Case family the husband, a mechanic in Detroit, leaves home at 7.15, lunch in hand and well breakfasted.

Mrs. America's dressing in the morning is a quick-to-get-into house dress, old silk stockings, perhaps with mended ladders, or ten-cent cotton ones. Her shoes may be worn at the heels and scuffed—they're often cast-off dress shoes—for she hates to spend the money for comfortable shoes for housework. What she wears is worn to the last thread; sometimes it's neat, sometimes it's not, but it's cheap if it's bought for the purpose. Extra quarts of milk for the children, school shoes for them, or money for an occasional movie are more important to her than better clothes for housework. With days as crowded as hers she's apt to let herself go if anything has to.

Breakfast is ready by 7.30 if she is up at 7, in many cases with lunch for husband either put up the night before or done while getting the breakfast. Between times, she'll

tell seven-year-old Janey what dress to put on, perhaps hunt it up for her, see that she brushes her teeth, and tie up four-year-old Willie's shoes. If she has a modern range—and nearly eight million have been sold in the last five years—she'll not be long cooking breakfast. Perhaps she put cereal in the cooker the night before. If she uses coal or wood for breakfast getting, she'll need another 20 to 30 minutes to get the fire going; so she'll get up a bit earlier, get the porch swept, perhaps the papers picked up in the living room while she's waiting for the fire. Possibly she runs down to the cellar to shake the furnace, but chances are husband has time for that before shaving. If it's a wash-day, she may get the clothes sorted before breakfast. If she has time, she'll do all the washing to-day, or she may leave the coloured wash until the end of the week. In a family of four with not too many clothes to go around, wash-day generally stretches through the week anyway, with Janey suddenly needing the pink dress in the laundry bag for a birthday party, Dad running out of shirts, or Willie finding an uncommonly large number of puddles in the backyard.

If she lives in the suburbs or country, the chances are she has a car—quite likely necessary for getting husband to work, the children to school, for shopping, for any sort of freedom for herself; but it won't be run many miles. Probably it was far from new when bought. Perhaps husband rides to work by a street-car or bus or is near enough to walk. Janey, too, may be near enough to school to go by herself or by school bus, making her feel very independent indeed, and saving Mrs. America at least an hour's work a day. But otherwise, she kisses her husband good-bye, spends a few minutes cajoling Willie to finish all his cereal, brushes Janey's hair, then gets into her own coat and hat. Willie goes along on a school trip, too, and if it's winter she spends

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some more time wriggling him into his snow suit and persuading him to leave Chips, the dog, at home.

On the way back from the school trip she stops for a loaf of bread, meat for dinner, finds a bargain for the day in oranges and decides that she'll make marmalade instead of finishing the wash that day. She's back home by nine or so, and if it's not too cold she sends Willie out to play in the backyard where she can keep her eye on him from the laundry window. She has hardly started washing the sheets when the doorbell rings—a man coming for the instalment on the radio—and then Willie starts to wail when the neighbour's dog comes over and gets into a fierce fight with Chips. Finally she gets the white wash out on the line, romps with the dog (to Willie's delight), and then goes inside to make the beds, dust-mop the bedroom floors, and pick up in the bathroom. She may decide the bathroom floor needs scrubbing, and then—perhaps she does the kitchen floor too. The clock strikes eleven and she realizes that she's late for Willie's mid-morning snack of milk and biscuits. He comes in full of questions about why Chips and the neighbour's dog don't get along together, and what makes the sun go on and off, and what are clouds made of anyway? After this metaphysical discussion, he goes out again; she turns on the radio, dusts downstairs and picks up in the living-room. If the house is small, as it probably is (over a third of American homes have one to four rooms), going over it doesn't take long and with a good carpet sweeper and dust mop it isn't hard. Like a million and a half other women, she bought a vacuum cleaner last year for a more thorough cleaning once or twice a week.

Now it's 11.30, with just enough time to make a light pudding for dinner or get started on the marmalade before lunch. But a neighbour telephones, and she spends her first ten minutes sitting down and discussing whether

or not she can get to a bridge party next week, the little Thompson boy who hit the neighbour's daughter on the head with a geography book, and the dress bargains in town. Mrs. America probably makes as many of the children's clothes and maybe of her own as she can, finding that this way she can get better material and longer wearing quality than she could otherwise afford. Perhaps she knits them sweaters, too. But these things, like the mending, get done at odd moments, sometimes in the afternoons but more often in the evenings after the children are asleep.

Every day has its special task if she plans her week. Monday or Tuesday, washing. Tuesday, ironing; Wednesday, cleaning upstairs; Thursday, downstairs; Friday, extra washing, and baking. Saturday, special shopping and more baking. Ironing gets finished at odd moments as a rule. Most women follow this general sort of plan, subject to many changes, rather than a real time schedule.

Noon finds Mrs. America taking small son along to bring Janey back from school. As she fixes a hot lunch of soup and vegetables and milk, Janey chatters about Doris who has a beautiful blue dress with pink stitching—and can she have one too?—and all the girls who have real ice skates now instead of babyish two runners, and how she hates her teacher Miss Ames because she scolded her for giggling during rest period—and it wasn't she at all; it was Doris Green. And then, bursting into tears, she says that everybody's been asked to Anne's birthday party but herself and maybe if she had a beautiful blue dress like Doris's she'd be asked too. Willie, upset at her tears, adds his wails of protest, and knocks his whole dish of soup on to the newly scrubbed floor.

It's tests like this that make a mother. Mrs. America, ignoring her own harried nerves, soothes Willie, tactfully suggests that perhaps Janey hasn't been nice to Anne

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in some way, and that she's sure her new green dress is just as pretty as Doris's. Janey, immediately contrite at having upset her small brother, promises to play Red Rover with him that afternoon and order is restored. Mrs. America, wiping up the floor, suddenly laughs as she remembers how jealous Janey was when Willie first arrived. She even threatened to shoot him when Daddy picked him up.

After lunch Janey gets taken back to school and Willie has his nap. Now at last Mrs. America has a little time to herself, for a magazine story, perhaps, or a letter to her mother, or some attention to her hair and nails. For although she probably has a not-too-expensive permanent wave, she does shampooing and setting by herself as a rule. For the next hour or so she's still 'on call' but not likely at work. A neighbour may drop in, the metre reader may want to get into the basement, a salesman may beguile her into looking at the most wonderful set of books—all ten of them for only 50 cents a week!—but Mrs. America doesn't mind these interruptions. She rather likes to have someone to talk to now and then.

When Willie wakes up, she takes him and the puppy out for a walk, and then drives over to get Janey at school. While the children play in the yard with some of the neighbouring youngsters, she takes in the wash, and then realizes it's too late to get started on that marmalade to-day. She decides to peel the potatoes and string the beans for supper, before Willie comes in and has to be bathed and fed. Janey comes in too, for it's getting dark now, and sets the table quite expertly, although the forks are likely to change places with the spoons. The kitchen is warm, and full of good smells, and Willie grows sleepy over his carrots. Janey is full of a host of new tales, new devilries of the Thompson boy, and renewed pleas for

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skates. Soon Daddy comes in and carries Willie off to bed, with possibly time for a story before dinner is on the table. Janey is allowed to stay up for dinner with Mommy and Daddy but goes to bed soon after. Perhaps Daddy gives a hand, wiping the dishes while talking over the day's events, how his work is going, Janey's last report card, Willie's tonsils which must come out—and where is the money coming from?

Dishes done, a few preparations are made for morning and then there is time for some reading, mending while listening to the radio, or for a game of Chinese chequers with husband. Now and then friends come in for some bridge. Sometimes two or three families get together for a co-operative dinner, done cheaply and simply but with much fun.

She wants an orderly house, Mrs. America, but many's the day she just doesn't get around to anything. There was the time Janey had pneumonia. They were lucky to get anything to eat at all that week. Daddy took his turn at meal getting, such as it was, and at nursing to give mother a few hours' sleep, but it was a month before the household routine was straightened out again. There is still a disorderly collection of papers and magazines on the living-room bookcase that arrived then and haven't been read yet, and a basket of mending under the table in the bedroom that hasn't been touched. Things pile up like that every now and then. Attic stairs take a load of cast-offs that need sorting out. The back entry has its share of bottles, cans, and boxes that somebody feels should be saved or which simply haven't been thrown away. But Mrs. America doesn't feel too downhearted about it. She knows that she'll get around to these things sometime. Meantime, Janey is strong again, and she herself has caught up on sleep and feels like a human being once more. There's always another day ahead.

Dad may get the rise due him and even if he doesn't they'll pull through.

One of her most irritatingly persistent jobs, Mrs. America tells us, is keeping picked up. She doesn't have enough places to put things. The closets in her home, like the Kriebels' in Seattle, are typically inadequate. Two persons have to share each clothes closet and the space is often narrow and inaccessible. Storage space is lacking for the vacuum cleaner, ironing board, golf bags, umbrellas, top coats, and hats in daily use. In fact better closets are direly needed in most American homes. A clothes closet per person should be the rule. 'The boys would pick up after themselves if only they had a place to put things,' thinks Mrs. Kriebel, who says she spends at least a third of her time picking up. And Mrs. McMillin believes: 'Give the children a place to play and a place where they can keep their playthings and they won't mess up the house. Keeping the dirt out and preventing the scratches so that we don't have to clean them up is my way.'

It's this accumulation of things that makes yearly or semi-annual house-cleaning necessary. In mother's day, house-cleaning meant taking up the carpets and scrubbing everything once and for all. To-day, Mrs. America cleans her house daily with a floor duster, a sweeper, and once or twice a week with a vacuum cleaner, and with good floor and furniture finishes and washable wall coverings it's not hard to keep clean. She still has an occasional house-cleaning orgy of sorting through the closets, shampooing the rugs, cleaning the draperies and chair coverings, making seasonable changes in the furnishings, and cleaning up the attic and the basement. But all this gets done a little at a time so as not to disorganize completely the ordinary routine of the home.

If she had a little more money this young Mrs. America



would do things a little differently. She would send out part of her washing while the children were small, using the wet-wash perhaps. She would get help when there were emergencies. She would have a girl come in regularly to stay with the children at least an evening a week so she and her husband could have a bit of time to go out together and one afternoon so she could go to a card party, the movies, or a Women's Club meeting with a free mind. As it is, Janey goes to a friend's house and she takes Willie with her now and then to the club, but it's distracting with him to think of. On Saturday afternoons she and Dad take turns staying with the children, so that she now and then gets an afternoon off with her friends. She's not discouraged. The work isn't too hard, just confining. The children will not need so much care always. In fact—they'll be a help.

And as the children grow older and Dad gets ahead a bit, hours of work will not be so long, and the budget will be more elastic. Look ahead ten years, and you'll find that Mrs. America has a new refrigerator (over two million women bought one last year). Soon she'll be getting a better range. She also has a new vacuum cleaner.

The second-hand one she started housekeeping with simply went to pieces. Didn't owe her anything either. They've done the kitchen over. She dreamed about this all through the early years when the children were small and life for her was centred within the four walls of that room. She read the advertisements in the magazines, studied all the articles on kitchen planning she could lay her hands on, even wrote to one of the women's magazines for help with her plans, and now it has all come true. It's the envy of her friends, this new kitchen. And Jane and Will just love to have their friends out there.

She's had time to make friends with the neighbours

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in the last few years. She goes to the Women's Club regularly and she and Dad belong to a bridge group which plays regularly every two weeks. Jane has just finished high school and Will—tall like his father, and handsome too—is going into his second year. Smart as a whip, he is. 'He ought to go to college,' thinks Mrs. America, but there isn't money for that, unless he helps himself for the most part. 'If he wants to do that, we'll do all we can for him,' say his mother and father to each other.

Keeping house is much easier than it was. The new kitchen—arranged for convenience—really saves a lot of steps and Jane's a real help. Mrs. America believes a girl should help at home, occasionally cook Sunday dinner, do the marketing, learn to make some of those new clothes she's hankering for. Not all girls are so willing to learn as Jane is, and not all Mrs. Americas use the necessary firmness to get it done.

Then comes the time when Mr. and Mrs. America are alone—the children have gone off to homes of their own, coming back only for holidays or vacation visits. Mrs. America has time to sew, to read, to keep her house more nearly the way she always meant it to be. And it stays that way too, with no children to muss things up. But she misses them. Days aren't quite busy enough until she gets into the swing of the literary groups, the Garden Club, helping more at the Community House. Then things are humming once more. She's still most interested in the home but also in things that make homes, schools, parks, playgrounds what they are in America to-day. She does a double share now—remembering the earlier days when she couldn't help. For she is two persons now—still the Mrs. America of twenty years ago who worried over tonsil bills and why Jane wasn't asked to Anne's birthday party, and how to pay the milkman,

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but also the older woman of to-day, whose smile is serene, whose stockings never have runs, and who secretly marvels how she ever did so much in those golden, funny, frantic days that slipped so quickly by.

GRACE L. PENNOCK



## HOW AMERICA EATS

THE kitchen is still, as it has been from our earliest American beginnings, the very centre of American family life. The good food created and produced there is a part of our cultural history. As a nation we like to 'eat well', and, particularly in these times, do eat better than any other nation in the world.

The cooks of America have a great responsibility—that of sending their men off to work and their children to school fortified by three square meals a day. American women of to-day know more about food 'that is good for you' than their grandmothers did. Good food—and the right kind—has taken the place of such potions as sulphur and molasses—a springtime panacea of the red-flannel era. They hear about nutrition and well-balanced meals in their home magazines, daily newspapers, on the radio, in their club study groups—also from district nurses and health organizations. Their children, boys and girls alike, are taught its basic principles in school as part of their general elementary education. Many mothers of to-day have had home economics training in school or college. Even Mrs. O'Brien, whose family is allowed only a dollar a day for the seven of them by the relief agency, says, 'Evaporated milk is just as good for my kids as fresh.' Women to-day really have an easier job of providing nourishing meals than their mothers or grandmothers had in their day. We drink more milk and eat more salads and 'greenstuff'. The mixed green salad has come to stay. The flat piece of lettuce topped with a sculptured atrocity or a dab of 'mex' is almost a museum piece. They were never real salads anyway.

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Vegetable and fruit stalls, particularly in city markets, are piled high with a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables all through the year. The shopper may pick and choose now, while only a few short years ago fresh vegetable offerings in winter were limited to a continuous monotony of potatoes, carrots, turnips, onions, and marrow. Oranges were a Christmas treat and apples the staple fruit. The annual per capita consumption of vegetables other than potatoes has increased from 26·36 pounds in 1919-20—1923-24 to 31·36 pounds in 1934-35. In 1920, truck shipments of lettuce in the United States amounted to 13,778. In 1935 truck shipments amounted to 45,669. Figures on consumption of fruits show increases too. Production and shipment of oranges, for instance, jumped from ten million boxes in 1900 to about 55 million in 1935. The commercial canners have added a wide variety of food products to their lines and improved their canning processes to retain vitamins and minerals.

Women who do not need to choose hamburger when they'd prefer prime ribs have a much better opportunity of setting a good table, of course, than those who must count their pennies. However, spending more money on food does not necessarily mean better nutrition. The United States has the most abundant and most varied food supplies in the world—enough for all of us. Yet from surveys made by the United States Department of Agriculture it is known that 'all too many families in the United States have poor diets; some have fair or passable diets; and only relatively few have really good diets'. The more nutrition-conscious our people become, the better the standard of national health will become. To ensure a good margin of safety, we should spend at least as much on milk (including cream and cheese when used) as for meats, poultry, and fish, and at least as much for fruits and vegetables as for meats, poultry, and fish.



The average American family thrives on good plain cooking, and meals have a lot to do with making a family happy. Dishes like Mrs. Case's meat pie, made from left-over pot roast, and Mrs. Griffin's scalloped frankfurters and potatoes are inexpensive and typical of the sound economy most housewives practice.

The American housewife, whether newly wed, like Mrs. Chase, or with years of experience behind her, wants cookery books and knows how to make use of them.



Sometimes the 'small fry' are sent to the store. Here Billy Gillespie buys a head of cabbage.



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Education is constantly being directed toward including more and more of these protective foods in our diets.

Mothers are really interested in providing the best possible health for their families, and do the best they can with what they have. They often have to scrimp, but they are more gay than grim about it. Such a mother is Mrs. Case, one of our neighbours in Detroit. She has just \$9 a week to feed her family of four—two adults and two young children. For the life of her, she couldn't reel off the number of calories in a glass of milk or how many vitamins lurk in a single carrot. But she does know that if she sets her table with cereals, bread, milk, butter, and eggs, and plenty of fruit and vegetables—with meat in some form as often as she can manage—the vitamins and minerals will take care of themselves. As she says, 'I believe it's cheaper to buy good food than to pay doctor's bills.' It means skipping luxury foods. But she says they don't miss what they can't have.

Just to see how well the Cases were making out nutritionally, we tallied up one of her usual day's meals in terms of calories, proteins, minerals and vitamins. Not that we were dubious—just curious. The results were most interesting. For here was an average homemaker, whose knowledge of calories and vitamins was as vague as that of her next-door neighbour, doing a perfectly swell job of feeding her family on \$1.28 a day. Just how well she made out is shown below. In almost every instance there was enough to spare of necessary 'valuables'.

	<i>Approximate day's nutritional needs for the Case family.*</i>	<i>What the Case family actually were getting, nutritionally, from one day's food.*</i>
Calories	8,200	9,830
Protein	222.5 grams	379 grams
Calcium	3.68 grams	5.18 grams
Phosphorus	4.64 grams	6.76 grams
Iron	.043-.051 grams	.042 grams

\* Values determined from *Laboratory Handbook of Dietetics* by Mary Swartz Rose.

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	<i>Approximate day's nutritional needs for the Case family.*</i>	<i>What the Case family actually were getting, nutritionally, from one day's food.*</i>
Vitamin A	19,600 Int. units <sup>1</sup>	21,578 Int. units <sup>1</sup>
Vitamin B or Thiamin	1,090 Int. units <sup>2</sup>	1,758 Int. units <sup>2</sup>
Vitamin C or Ascorbic acid	2,700 Int. units <sup>3</sup>	6,360 Int. units <sup>3</sup>
Vitamin G or Riboflavin	1,900 units <sup>4</sup>	1,943 units <sup>4</sup>

\* Values determined from *Laboratory Handbook of Dietetics* by Mary Swartz Rose.

Vitamins : Sherman unit values converted to International unit values by Munsell Method

<sup>1</sup> Sherman units multiplied by .7 for International units.

<sup>2</sup> Sherman-Chase units multiplied by 1 for International units.

<sup>3</sup> Sherman units multiplied by 10 for International units.

<sup>4</sup> Sherman-Bourquin—no International unit.

In addition the children had cod-liver oil through the winter, which provided them with vitamin D and additional vitamin A. More dark bread instead of white would have given them more of a margin of iron; and the mornings the family have eggs for breakfast their iron score goes up, too.

While it doesn't necessarily prove that every family given the same amount of money would get the same results, it does prove that a fairly good diet can be had at low cost if women put their minds to it. And we believe there are plenty of other women who are doing every bit as good a job as Mrs. Case.

Here is Mrs. Case's basic plan for daily meals:

**BREAKFAST:** Orange juice for Mrs. Case and the two children.

Mr. Case prefers to eat his orange rather than drink it.

Oatmeal and milk is an everyday occurrence. The children like bran or wheat flakes sprinkled on theirs. Then there's toast and coffee for the adults and milk for the children.

Once or twice a week there's bacon and eggs.

**LUNCH:** For the children and Mrs. Case—a filling cream soup, bread and butter, raw celery or carrot strips, sandwiches occasionally, milk, and fruit. Mr. Case carries two or three cheese sandwiches, cake and fruit to the plant in a paper sack.

**DINNER:** An inexpensive main dish, such as macaroni with cheese or with tomatoes and hamburger, or scalloped potatoes with bacon or frankfurters, or vegetable beef-bone soup; a green or yellow cooked vegetable; a raw vegetable or fruit salad; sometimes cottage cheese; milk; bread and butter; simple puddings and fruit desserts for the children—sometimes pie or cake for Mr. and Mrs. Case.

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There are, however, numbers of families right here in America who do not fare so well. Some do not even have enough to eat to stave off hunger. Others more fortunate may be able to keep soul and body together—yet do not have enough to keep them even in fair health or able to work. 'The difference between a rich man and a poor man is this—the former eats when he pleases and the latter when he can get it.' According to the United States Department of Agriculture, a study was made several years ago concerning 29,400,000 families and 10,000,000 single individuals, representing over 126,000,000 persons. Of this number 4,000,000 families, or about 14 per cent, who had an average annual income of \$312, were spending only slightly more than \$1 a week per person for food, or about 5 cents a meal.

Mothers of these families have to make a dollar stretch to limits one might think impossible, and still it never stretches far enough. They can buy only the foods that 'stick to the ribs'. Cooking is little trouble, for there's little to cook. Good nutrition is absolutely out of their reach. As Mrs. Bracey, the wife of a coloured sharecropper and mother of an always hungry brood, says, 'We tries to figure on two meals a day, but plenty times they ain't enough for but one.'

Families receiving public aid, like the Carrs and the O'Briens, are able to make out a little better than otherwise if they live in one of the communities that operate the stamp plan. This plan of giving surplus food to these people is doing much to raise the health standards of those families who do make use of it. Even then, it may be just a drop in the bucket. When it's all used up, they're still hungry.

In most of our American homes it's the 'Mrs.' who holds the purse strings. America's annual food bill is well over \$14 billion. This enormous figure is by far

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the largest single item of the nation's yearly spending. It takes 28 per cent of our national income. Conclusive proof that America as a whole sets a good table. Bringing this figure down to family size, the average city family spends one-third of its annual income, or \$508 a year, on food. Even American families on relief—though we don't consider that they eat very well—really eat better than the working man in some other countries.

Few families keep accurate food accounts with every food purchase itemized. But in most homes a certain amount is set aside weekly or monthly for food. The smaller the income, of course, the less flexible this allotment can be. Where money must be stretched to cover all the needs of the family, with nothing left for luxuries, the food money usually comes out of the pay envelope first. Enough to eat is of first importance. What remains is spread as far as it will go.

It has been our observation that the women of America are thrifty shoppers—not only those who absolutely have to make pennies do the work of dimes but also those who have an unusually liberal amount to spend on food. Mrs. Wilson's husband is a millionaire. The Guthries are considered 'comfortably well off'. Yet both these women do their own marketing; sniff their own melons and keep a wary eye on the scales.

In these days of supermarkets and chain stores there is sometimes a wide variance in price among several stores in the same community. A favourite brand of cereal, for instance, may be selling for several cents less a block away. Years ago women had to depend on one or maybe two grocers—but nowadays even in small communities women can and do shop around to their heart's content.

Most of America shops once a week for the bulk of its staple groceries. We found this true in almost every

case. Sometimes it's on Saturday. Most often we found it depends on what day the pay envelope comes home. This moderately large-quantity purchasing is made possible by advances in home refrigeration. Housewives, if they plan their meals ahead, need shop only this once a week for staple items. Then they buy enough fresh meats, vegetables, and fruits to fill out the week—daily or two or three times during that period.

Grandmother shopped less often. In those days she bought her apples and flour by the barrel, a side of bacon at a time. Root vegetables and potatoes were stored in bins in a cool place in the cellar. She canned all summer for the winter table. To-day women not only have less storage room, but it isn't necessary to keep food in such quantities as it was then. Now it's a few shelves in the cupboard that are devoted to extra cans of fruits, vegetables, soups, packages of quick desserts, biscuit mixes, and such foods as canned baked beans, corned-beef hash, etc. The housewife buys a few extras for this ever-ready shelf each week. Even Mrs. Griffin does so on her \$7 weekly food allowance. At least one night a week, she says, they have 'supper off the shelf'. Quick dinners are often the rule in many homes; for women to-day have many activities that keep them outside their homes.

Beef is the No. 1 item on the country's food bill. Milk comes next. Then come bread and baked goods.

Before America grocery-shops, miles of lists are made. One or two trips without one make the list-business a 'must'—or so our neighbours say.

Women who have to keep to a budget compare prices in the food advertisements of their daily papers. They shop until they get the best values for their money. They take advantage of large-package savings and watch for bargains in canned goods. They usually know what they want before they go to buy, but usually come home with

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at least a few changed plans in to-morrow's dinner. 'The spinach wasn't so nice to-day, so I bought green beans instead.'

Her own experience, advertisements, magazines, newspapers, and radio have taught Mrs. America what to look for in quality. She knows that the cheapest is not always the best. She reads the labels. She prefers quick-frozen or canned foods to inferior quality fresh foods.

Usually the women of America do the shopping, but not always. For instance, Ted and Ginger, the young couple up in Schenectady, shop together on Saturdays. Mrs. Blair makes out the list, but it's Mr. Blair who combs St. Petersburg stores for bargains. Mr. Kriebel, too, out in Seattle, is often the shopper of the family, picking up what they need on his way home from the office. Sometimes the 'small fry' is sent to the store. It's good training for him, though apt to wreak havoc with mother's plans—at times.

Once the booty is delivered in an orange crate or soap-flake carton or toted home in tall heavy sacks from the cash-and-carry, the business of preparing it for dinner begins.

The American housewife cooks less 'by guess and by golly' than her mother and still less than her grandmother did. She may cook the old family favourites from memory, but she wants recipes for most of her cooking. She gets them from every source imaginable. She keeps stacks of food-company cook-booklets. She has usually not one but several cook-books. A treasured collection of her mother's recipes, the pages tattered and smudged from use, often holds an honoured place in her recipe library. She clips recipes from magazines and newspapers. She finds recipes in her bag of flour and on a box of raisins. In fact, all the food products commercially packed that come to her kitchen bring her new recipes for her growing

repertoire. Sometimes she keeps recipes on cards in a neat file—sometimes in scrapbooks. Very often the drawer of her kitchen table is her library. She may lose a recipe or lend it to a friend. If it's a recipe she treasures and can't quite remember, she'll take the time to write to the source from which the recipe came.

Women love to swap recipes with their friends and neighbours. At the bridge club, sewing club, or wherever women gather, recipes change hands. If they become enamoured of a speciality of the house served them at dinner, they are sure to ask for the recipe before the coffee.

The woman who is an experienced cook usually follows recipes to a T, at least the first time. If the family approves, the recipe goes into her permanent collection. But before it has been served many times, though she may not have changed the actual structure of the recipe, she has often ad-libbed with a pet seasoning, flavouring, or garnish. The original recipe has become her pattern—the final creation is entirely her own. It is no longer just a recipe. It expresses her individuality and reflects in a greater measure family tastes. And she's good at adapting recipes according to the market price of the ingredients. In other words, she uses what she has. The inexperienced cook—and she isn't always a bride either—often makes a hash of a recipe. Nevertheless, she usually has an alibi. A young wife tells this story on herself. At dinner one night her husband commented, 'It seems to me, my dear, that there is something wrong with this cake.' She smiled at him triumphantly, and said, 'That shows how much you know about it. The cook-book says it's delicious!'

American women are excitedly alert to new ideas; they like to experiment and will try any new food product that appears on the market, provided it is within their means. They are wont to combine modern sophisticated recipes with old-fashioned, homely favourites in the same

meal. Likewise they do not consider it sacrilegious to serve a century-old favourite with a sprightly modern garnish to bring it up to date.

To-day's housewife can't help being a good cook if she really wants to be. She may not know all the answers—but if she did there would be little use for pages devoted to food and its preparation. Her markets offer an all-year-round variety and an evenness of quality of food. Her kitchen is equipped with tools to make her cooking easier and more pleasurable. Modern heat-controlled ranges help her attain perfection in the food she cooks. Modern refrigerators not only keep her food longer and in better condition than the old-fashioned ice-boxes, but also do some of the food preparation for her. Refrigerator desserts, salads, etc., are more popular to-day than ever before. Good ranges and refrigerators cut down waste, too.

Even at that, many of our American women are wasteful cooks. What we throw away as a matter of course would be shocking to housewives in foreign lands, who use every bit of edible food, down to the last spoonful of fat drippings and even the chicken bones.

In addition her kitchen contains all the modern aid-to-cooking gadgets imaginable. Recipes are given in standard measurements—eliminating guesswork; they are illustrated with photographs, sometimes in colour, so that she may taste with her eyes and know how the dish will look before she tries the recipe.

American cookery—real, native American cookery—is honest, simple, and savoury. The average American family thrives on good plain cooking and such nourishing victuals as ham and eggs, roast beef, corn on the cob, cole slaw and green salads made with French dressing, apple pie and strawberry shortcake. Even when they entertain, our cooks know, too, that a meal of two courses,



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excellently cooked and served smartly, is better than five courses indifferently cooked. They may go 'fancy' when they have parties or grow rapturous over a foreign concoction in a restaurant. Usually, though, when families dine out they do not want food with 'expensive' foreign names. If it's roast beef they want it to be called roast beef. Because this is true, restaurants and hotels all over the country are coming to print their menus in 'plain English'.

The poor can't pick their menus. They eat whatever the chain store specials are or the food depot is distributing that day or week. Oatmeal and milk may be their entire breakfast. Their one big meal at supper-time may be bread and beans or soup made from a nickel soupbone. But beans reverently cooked can be a feast. In the South it's likely to be corn pone, greens, and 'pot likker'. When they can buy a little chopped meat it goes into a mixture of meat and macaroni, canned tomatoes, and onions. But on the whole bread and cereals just have to fill them up. The milk is usually saved for the children.

Families of four eating on \$7-\$9 food budgets have simple, stick-to-the-ribs main dishes which are the backbone of their evening meals. Vegetable soup made with a meaty soupbone, scalloped potatoes with bacon, stews, meat loaf, macaroni with cheese or bolstered with hamburger and tomatoes, baked beans, meat pies and corned-beef hash. The Sunday roast beef is a pot roast which gives them enough for meat pie or hash another day. Chicken fricassee, roast pork, or half a ham for a boiled dinner, are other Sunday favourites.

Almost every one of these economical cooks is inventive with left-overs, knows at least a dozen ways to glorify hamburger and has a good repertoire of stretchable dishes based on macaroni, spaghetti, or rice. The casserole is brought down from the cupboard shelf more than once during the week.

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As food money increases, families buy more chops and juicy steaks, add soups and cocktails to their menus, have fried chicken and roast prime ribs of beef for company dinners, and generally go in for as many gourmet specialities as their purses permit. Men still have much of the 'say' when it comes to meal plans. Women cook what their husbands and families like—have their own favourites for hen parties.

Traditional native American favourites turn up in every collection of 'my best recipes'. Cooks from different sections of the country ardently defend local specialities, are firm in their own convictions as to just how they should be prepared. Family baked-bean recipes come to us from the West as well as New England. Most families have a cooky jar and keep it filled. Gingerbread recipes are collectors' items. Four women of the twelve sent us theirs, and no two are alike in content or flavour. All are good. When it comes to seasoning or spicing food it's every woman to her own taste, and according to the section in which she lives. Apple, lemon, mince, and pumpkin take the lead in pie favourites. Chocolate cakes lord it over all others—with perhaps plain and spice coming in for mention. Women are usually accused, but men are the real pie and cake eaters.

Epicurean treats characteristic of the locality in which each family lives turned up in our conversation with these families. From Mrs. Guthrie came an elegant and sophisticated collection of such gourmet dishes as stuffed oysters, Creole okra gumbo, jambalaya, and an unusual kidney stew. Most Creole dishes made of fish, meat or vegetables, she says, start with a roux and depend on subtle seasoning with onion, garlic, parsley, thyme, and bayleaf to make them distinctively Creole.

Western families go in for Spanish and Mexican dishes and native sea-food at its best. Their fruit desserts and

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salads are something special. New Englanders set their tables with traditional Saturday baked beans, brown bread, and corned-beef hash, and like doughnuts for breakfast.

Fewer families to-day hold to the conventional Sunday dinner. There are some, of course, to whom it is a firmly rooted tradition. More often the big meal of the week at home is set forth Saturday night, giving mother a day off. Roadside inns and hotdog stands do a rushing business on Sunday. Even families on small incomes have a roadster of sorts. Sunday night suppers at home, picnics and outdoor-fireplace steak fries are taking the place of Sunday dinner at one o'clock.

An American woman will have as much company or as many parties as she can afford. Her parties may be casually informal or be carried off with glamorous pomp, depending upon the occasion and her mode of living. As much as the affair itself she loves the hustle and bustle of getting ready for a party, the going over the house to make it shine, preparing the cats, and deciding whether to wear the 'black' or the new print.

When there's little money for entertaining, friends are invited to 'drop in for the evening'. Mrs. Case gathers her friends together in the summer and serves them lemonade and cookies on the lawn. Ginger and Ted make toasted sandwiches for their gang on Saturday nights. Mrs. Crick says she doesn't make any extra fuss for company—just puts up another bridge table and company has 'just what we have'. In the winter the Blairs have house guests from up north. 'We don't treat them like company,' she says; 'everybody helps and pays his own way.'

In their respective home towns the Guthrie and McMillin parties are looked-forward-to social events. The McMillins like to have buffet dinner parties after football games. The Guthries' favourite entertainment is an eleven-o'clock

Sunday breakfast for twenty; and open house at Christmas—with all the trimmings—is another. Individually Mrs. Guthrie entertains her sewing club for luncheon and he his men friends for dinner.

While some women say they cook because they have to, most of them have a genuine affection for it—even though they may not say the same for other household tasks. Nowadays it's smart to know something about cooking. Young America is taught the essentials in the elementary schools. Debutantes take courses at city brides' schools. Women go to cooking schools sponsored by newspapers and the utility companies, and often turn to food pages first when they buy a home magazine. Even some men have their chefs-d'œuvre. Given an audience and proper encouragement, they can often beat women at their own game. Cookbooks are best-sellers and store counters demonstrating the newest kitchen gadgets never fail to draw a crowd. Many a woman has gone downtown to buy rompers for the baby and come home with a bean stringer or piecrust crimper instead. Thirty-four per cent of the men of the country rate the ability to cook as the first quality desirable in a wife. Which helps prove the well-known saw about the way to a man's heart. Young brides take on their jobs with gaiety and determination. Even women like Mrs. Wilson, Mrs. Guthrie, and Mrs. McMillin, who employ servants in their homes, plan their own menus and enjoy a cooking spree on the maid's day off. Americans enjoy and appreciate good food. A lip-smacking, good dinner is not only worth talking about in itself, but it's the best stimulator of lively conversation you can provide.

LOUELLA G. SHOUER

## FASHION SWEEPS THE COUNTRY

THE Twentieth Century from New York to Chicago . . . the City of Denver to Cedar Rapids, Iowa. In a beautiful fishbowl observation car, I was streaking over the last hundred and fifty miles of farmland, punctuated with small cities . . . eclipsing the past in speed, comfort, and luxury of travel. America is always eclipsing herself, I was thinking . . . getting something better, more useful, more pleasing to the eye—whether it's a coffee pot or a dress or a silver zephyr train. Fashion is the Big Parade. Fashion is America's Big Business and her true love in the same breath. How she loves it . . .

-I could see my path across the map in a bright red line, from New York westward. Along the same path, the same day, would go hundreds of carloads of silk stockings, hats, coats, dresses, strings of pearls . . . speeding to every corner of the country. I had a package, too, a box that contained a new spring costume for a certain Mrs. Aulden Griffin, of Cedar Rapids. And now I was arriving . . .

At the Roosevelt Hotel, I had a corner room with two good windows, an inner-spring mattress, a white tile bath with steaming hot water, a cake of soap in a crisp white paper, a telephone, a cloth to dust my shoes. Incomparable country, where every small city hotel is the counterpart of the biggest and best in the land! A well-appointed bellboy brought me ice water, opened my window. In with the breeze came my second impression of Cedar Rapids—the warm, comfortable nutty smell of Quaker Oats and nostalgic memories of a thousand childhood breakfasts. Sniffing with appreciation I looked

out the window, saw a street full of brisk shops and a movie sign announcing the preview of a picture that had not yet been to New York. I was in the heart of America—next-door neighbour to Hollywood and New York. Down the street I caught the gleam of a glass-windowed counter lunch. I went down and had fragrant sausage, wheat cakes, and coffee, to give me courage for my appointment.

Mrs. Griffin was coming to the hotel. I was frankly afraid to meet her. She was not just one woman. She was six million American women. I had seen her picture, knew she was president of the Woman's Club, had two children, did her own housework, was active in community life . . . ran her house and family on about \$2,000 a year. Sitting in my thirty-first floor office in New York, I had designed a five-piece costume for her that was to serve all purposes. I had done it to the best of my ability. I thought it was right. I hoped it would please her . . . but I was not too sure. I was seeing America, not delivering fashion ultimatums.

When Mrs. Griffin arrived a dozen things struck me at once. Her poise, good figure, clear skin; her pretty pastel tweed suit and fresh white blouse that might have been worn by any young matron from Long Island to Long Beach; her neat ankles, and well-shod feet, smart as any on Park Avenue. As we talked and tried on her new outfit, my admiration grew. No woman with a French maid could have looked better. This ability to live so well, so much better than in metropolitan centres! Many things that make life pleasant come from New York—but find their importance outside. Cities like New York are only the terminals of fashion.

Like many women, Mrs. Griffin shops at sales. She has taste, knows quality, waits for 'markdowns'. I think the fact that clothes are brought out in stores long before

their natural season is partly responsible for 'markdowns'. Few women can afford to buy ahead of the season.

'One costume a season' is all Mrs. Griffin can afford, and she pays about \$30 for it. The costume I had made for her—a two-piece printed dress, navy-blue wool-and-rayon skirt, coat, and bolero—was what was needed. She was pleased and I was delighted. When she left, I rushed out to Western Union, wired my assistant to go ahead, have it manufactured, see that the print was a tested fabric, watch it every step of the way, and be sure it would sell for about \$30. Lots of other women like Mrs. Griffin would want it at that price.

The bag that went with Mrs. Griffin's costume was a big fabric pouch with a nailhead frame—dollar edition of similar 'originals' first created by Lilly Daché and John-Frederics. Thousands of women carried it the next spring. And a hundred thousand more the same little flower pin, copied from a great jeweller's piece to sell for \$1. There's democracy of fashion!

How quickly America accepts the thing that is 'right'. We have an almost intuitive reaction. A current of telepathy seems to run through our minds as our highways thread the country—making people see alike from Maine to California. We dress alike because we think alike. National advertising, billboards, newspapers, radios have had a lot to do with it. And still we are a nation of strong individualists! We are like our own fingerprints. No two alike. We may make a thousand identical dresses, but every woman will wear hers differently, will change it with her own accessories and her own personality.

Mrs. Crick, of Cucamonga, California, is a real individualist, and yet she chose one of the 'big dresses' of the season. A 'runner', the stores call it. We found it at the May Company in Los Angeles and it would have been in any other stores at the same time. A simple, printed rayon in a double-breasted, soft-shirtwaist style—an all-round dress

for all spring and summer. Thousands of yards of this type of material were sold last year.

Back to New York and monthly fashion pages between trips . . . then out again to the far North-west, by 'plane to Seattle, where I met Mrs. Kriebel, at the Olympic Hotel for lunch. She came in wearing a simple, becoming, navy-blue coat, dress, and hat with crisp short white cotton gloves and a piqué flower. I could not possibly have dressed her better, could not have offered a single improvement. This was her last spring's costume, good as ever this year. The only thing I could do and had done, was to bring her an autumn suit equally appropriate, ahead of season.

I saw the popular spots of the young crowd too, in Seattle. Jack and Bob Kriebel and their girls showed me their favourite dance places. It was summertime. And the girls were charming in their white sharkskin dresses, with flowers in their hair, red and white platform sandals on their feet. A pretty girl is like a melody, and fashion in America spreads like a catchy tune!

The same little pull-on pantie girdle, the same sheer silk stockings, the same shade of nail polish and lipstick—all are worn by the millionaire's daughter and by the career girl living and dressing on \$20 a week. Fashion editors in New York wear a little flowered turban from Suzy, and thousands of women follow, choosing the same little hat—\$1.95 from Burlington, Vermont, to Santa Fé. A replica of the American flag appears as a piece of jewellery on Fifth Avenue in June. By autumn more than a million of them are pinned on lapels from Portland, Maine, to Portland, Oregon. Someone, perhaps a college girl, decides to wear a pinafore, and for a whole year a whole nation is pinafore-conscious and pinafore-dressed from age three to thirty.

America lives that way. America dresses that way.



## FASHION SWEEPS THE COUNTRY

The fashion industry produces and distributes into every cranny of the land the same good things at the same low prices. Therein lies the democracy of fashion in America. We have an equality of style seen nowhere else in the world. Industry provides the wheels that turn it out and distribute it. But the American woman herself is the power that makes it go. Every American woman wants to look pretty and stay young—for her husband, her job, her children, her club. Not only does the American woman *want* to dress well. She has made up her mind about it. And everybody in the world knows what that means. What she wants she gets. She is getting her fashion—at the price she wants to pay.

With divine discontent, she is never quite satisfied. She always wants, and demands, something better. And so the American product is constantly being perfected and made more beautiful. To-day, fabrics are processed against fading, shrinking, spotting, wrinkling; against rain and snow and perspiration; against practically everything but fire! Best of all, these processed fabrics that add to the long life and the beauty of the garment appear in the low-price lines. The most 'privileged class' in fashion in this country to-day are those who buy at low or medium prices. They are getting more for their money than people who buy at higher prices. All the great designers in the nation know that certain styles in every collection are 'gratis to the nation'.

The story of the development of rayon, its improvement in quality, is typical of America. Having no silkworms, we turned magician and created by chemistry a whole new world of things out of cotton-linters or wood pulp. We are producing over a billion square yards of rayon and rayon mixtures a year. We are clothing a nation of people in these 'synthetics' which are no longer considered substitutes or ne'er-do-wells, but are liked for their

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

own qualities. Rayon is the equal of any fabric in fashion. Women value it for its texture, its drape, its lovely colours. Celanese sharkskin has become one of the great fabrics of the century—used in blouses, bathing suits, jackets, evening dresses. Rayon jersey is prized by the world's greatest designers as a fabric of infinite elegance. All the rayons have become better because of the developments of chemistry, the improvements of textile machinery—and the insistent demand of the American woman for more quality. The prices are lower too. Fine rayons belong to the millions. They have caught the spirit of fashion.

During the reign of this glamour-girl fabric, rayon, we tend to forget, for a time, the elegance and eternal beauty of 'pure silk'. We must not cold-shoulder this great ancestral fashion. In the days of the first Queen Elizabeth, it was worn only by queens and great ladies. Queen Elizabeth had the first pair of silk stockings. Captivated by their loveliness, as women are to-day, she introduced their manufacture into England. Now they belong to the millions—with 'Nylon' just beginning to be a runner-up. In our generation, we have seen pure-silk fabrics so moderately priced that the majority could afford it. And in the future, if the necessary business effort and money are put behind it, and if women insist on it, pure silk will become everybody's fabric.

There is a 'Great Divide' in quality in this country. In general, that divide comes at about the level of a \$50 dress. Into that dress goes as much quality, fabric, workmanship, and style as it is thus far in our power to put into it. Above that, we may get exclusiveness of design, few of a kind, one of a kind made to measure—but not yet that refinement of beauty and quality which has been known in the great workrooms of Europe. Fashion sweeps the country, but we are still young at it. We have excelled so far only in mass production.

## FASHION SWEEPS THE COUNTRY

The woman who buys a simple felt hat for about \$5, or even \$3.95, is getting unique value. (Forty-eight million a year are now sold at these prices!) In many cases, the identical quality felt body used in the inexpensive hat has been used also in hats priced at \$10, \$16.50, or higher. The little \$5 felt hat also has colour fashion equal to the more expensive ones, for a thousand colours a season are dyed to go into mass-production hats. Quality marches on, too, in the good American melting-pot manner. European refugees with the skill of generations as their heritage are now in America working on felts. With this skill and our genius for applying it, the industry hopes to produce felts as fine as any ever imported from Europe and to sell them to America 'at a price'.

American women demand the 'super', as the college girl puts it, and it comes in a thousand ways. We see it in food—in giant smooth white mushrooms, crisp greens that are bought for beauty as well as vitamins, refrigerated fruits that bring us a summer dessert in January. We find it in the neighbourhood playhouse with its soft lights, luxurious foyer serving tea, and comfortable lounge chairs—intimate atmosphere and comfort in contrast to old-fashioned stiff seats and hard gilt decorations. We have it in the taxi on the corner with a push-button window, a radio, a skylight; in Pullman cars with maid service; in 'planes with their pretty stewardesses. Industrial designers have put fashion into everything from toasters to motor cars. Even washing machines come tied with a cellophane bow, which itself is fashion. In large things and small, we are on the road to a degree of perfection new in the world. We are giving the future a new birth-right of perfection that is peculiarly new-world American. We shall see this perfection grow not only by machine but by new craftsmanship which will rise up in this country.

Even now the process of discrimination is setting in.

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

Fashion editors are the promoters of fashion. More importantly, we are the weeders, the advisers. We spend any amount of time and trouble to find the right fashions for our pages. It's a big responsibility. We know we are read and followed by millions of readers. As critics, let's face our national fashion faults:

*We Do a Good Thing to Death.* Open-toe shoes are a charming fashion for summer evenings, beach, or play clothes. Instead of confining them to their proper occasion women wore them morning, noon, and night, through rain and snow—notwithstanding the protests of all conscientious fashion editors! Veils come in—and are worn every hour of the day and night. Costume jewellery is one of our best fashion products, beautifully made at popular prices—but so many women wear too much of it, failing to realize that one attractive piece outshines a collection.

*We're Flora McFlimsies*—with a closetful of clothes and nothing to wear. Poor Flora! She chooses a hat for her face but not for her suit; a dress she adores, but that doesn't go with her coat. She 'falls for' a ball gown when she needs something simple with a jacket. She's a prey to every bargain, a gullible prospect for every advertisement. She hasn't any co-ordinating powers, or any resistance. She can't say 'No'.

*We Exaggerate and Overemphasize.* When short skirts are in, we tend to wear them shorter than the law allows, forgetting individual proportions. If fashion says seventeen inches from the floor—that means for average heights and figured; not for the five-foot contingent and not for unsightly legs. When shoulders are emphasized, they must be in proportion, too. Overpadding or too much width is hard on little women.

*We Adopt a Fashion Regardless!* Take the case of the chunky fur jacket. Everybody wore it—tall and small,

## FASHION SWEEPS THE COUNTRY

fat and thin. In fact, the sight of a short plump figure in a short skunk coat, very short skirt, and extremely high heels has become so typical that it is a common subject for national cartoons! The same thing can happen with a new fashion colour. 'Shocking pink' took the country by storm. A vivid and very smart accent colour when rightly used—it could be and *was* shockingly bad taste when worn with the wrong combinations, the wrong complexions or off-shade make-up.

Women are too ready to accept a fad; too eager to wear anything that is new, whether or not it is right for their own type. We have not yet learned to 'know ourselves'; to bring out our best points and recognize our limitations. We have always thought of the Frenchwoman as having great style. Her secret is knowing how to select, and how to 'put herself together'. We see this quality developing in America—often in the homely woman or 'ugly duckling' who manages to make herself distinguished and effective despite her handicaps. We look forward to the day when *every* woman will appraise herself critically and adopt a fashion *only* when it is right for herself as an individual, appropriate for what she does and the way she lives.

WILHELA CUSHMAN



## BEAUTY PREFERRED

**T**HROUGHOUT the ages men have respected virtue and gone quietly mad about beauty. And women, hearing their songs, have run to the mirror, the majority peering in to face an undeniable discrepancy.

The nineteenth century offered little in the way of solution but talcum powder and rag curlers. Even the pink cheeks of health were infrequent. Corsets kept women too busy fainting for them to experiment much with exercise and, anyway, exercise was some queer thing men did. Grandmother sat on her sofa like an hourglass, as firmly confined as her mental outlook.

Then came the Gibson Girl, proud of pompadour and stiffly elegant in her starched shirtwaist, her tailored aspect indicating that she was just beginning to take her place beside men in offices. After her came a succession of changing types, reflecting changing viewpoints. Outstanding was that defiant flapper of the post-war period, with her scanty, straight dress, boyish bob and battened-down bosom, proving (to herself) that her sex had found complete freedom!

To-day our glamour girl follows a more seductive pattern. She is neither the victim of hampering fashions nor the exaggerated symbol of rebellion. She is warm and curved, designed to develop and keep her charm through courtship, matrimony, and motherhood. Millions of women of all ages, in all parts of the country, are visualizing themselves as this irresistible young creature who is the heroine of all our movies, the central figure in most of our advertising, the 'heart interest' in our fiction . . . the American Glamour Girl.

## HOW AMERICA LIVES

During the past year, in the course of this singularly interesting project, *How America Lives*, I have been from coast to coast, in cities, in villages, and in countrysides. I have yet to find a spot where this ideal has not penetrated and where, within their own limitations, the women were not following valiantly in the wake of glamour. From talks with them I have gathered these summarized impressions of the American woman at teen age, at twenty, at thirty, and facing fifty.

*The American girl of high-school age* to-day is a poised, frank, well-balanced young lady. Her standard is naturalness—which, of course, implies changing moods. At one moment, she is arguing with her mother about having her hair shampooed, or loudly denying all interest in cosmetics (especially if her audience includes some of her schoolboy friends) and the next she is asking you, privately, if she can 'just try out your new lipstick for fun—please' or begging you to tell her if you know how Ginger Rogers keeps her hair in that 'cute roll'.

She is probably a healthier individual than her mother was at the same age, for her parents have had the advantage of an additional generation of medical and scientific knowledge. As she nears her sixteenth birthday, she is likely to be about five feet five inches in height and to weigh as much as 128 pounds, which is heavier than she will be a few years later.

Her digestion is sound and, thanks to public school health programmes and regular visits to the dentist, her teeth are likely to last her all her life. Her dental inspections may have started as early as her second birthday, for no longer do educated mothers say 'baby teeth don't matter'. To-day Americans keep 63,000 dentists busy, about twice as many as at the beginning of the century . . . and there is still a great educational task ahead. Compare



that figure, for instance, with the total of 75,000 beauty shops now operating in this country!

Our schoolgirl has absorbed a good deal of diet knowledge on her own. She knows it is a good idea to have fruit juice at breakfast—even better to eat the fruit—and milk at luncheon and dinner. She has, however, the faults common to most schoolgirls. While beauty articles may inform her that gorging on candy, after-school sundaes and rich in-between snacks will bring about blotchy skin or even acne (sometimes caused, too, by nervous or emotional strain), it is seldom until her later years in high school that her concern becomes so acute that she restrains herself.

At fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen her grooming equipment is simple—soap, toothbrush, and dentifrice. If her school has a class in hygiene or her mother has placed enough emphasis on the details of bodily care, she may have a mouthwash and deodorant. For bathing she will prefer, however, a leap in and out of a shower, washing with more frequency than thoroughness, and will count on liberal applications of sweet-smelling talcum (probably her mother's) to give her a feeling of femininity.

It is more than likely that she has a permanent wave in her hair—that beauty bulwark of the American woman who spends \$72,000,000 a year to be made curly in spite of nature, and more than half as much again to keep those waves in place! Our teen-age girl probably has her curls only on the ends of her hair, owing to the present 'spaniel' fashions which make any sort of mane acceptable, provided the ends are turned up. Twice a year she goes to a beauty shop to have a new 'permanent', but she washes her own hair at home once every week or so (which is far oftener than her mother did at the same age—some experts think too often) and she has become fairly adept at setting it herself. Her jar of all-purpose cream

is slapped on for chapped skin rather than as a daily diet.

Her make-up may consist solely of a powder compact for special occasions. You may be sure, however, that she has a lipstick concealed somewhere for experimental use. Also, she has, tucked away in the corner of a drawer, a sample or two of some 'beauty aid' which she has bought at a chain store, or sent for by coupon.

The capable little hands that are so bedecked with charm bracelets are not always as clean and cared for as they might be. Her nail polish, like her lipstick, is likely to be for special occasions only, especially if her school or family frowns on sophisticated colours. Her manicuring is uncertain. But that, again, is typical of our American schoolgirl; one afternoon the grubby-handed hoyden of the hockey field and the same evening—polished and perfumed to her finger tips.

*In her twenties* the American girl takes her appearance pretty seriously. She also comes closer to her 'Glamour Girl' ideal than is likely at any other time in her life. She is the starry-eyed senior at college; the ambitious young typist or salesgirl or switchboard operator, determined to make good at her job and move on to a better one with a fatter pay cheque. She is the dream bride of a million young men who annually lead her to the altar.

She is young—and she looks it. Hers is the slim, buoyant body that has given America the reputation of having the best-dressed women in the world. She can put a \$9.98 dress (size 12 or 14), copied from a \$250 original, on her million-dollar figure and defy competition. And she knows it!

What is that figure? Well, the United States Bureau of Standards measures perfection as follows: height, 5 ft. 6 in.; weight, 121 pounds; neck, 12 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches; bust,

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33½ inches; waist, 26½ inches; hips, 36 inches. Hollywood usually pares this down a bit, because of the well-known tendency of the camera to take curves on high. However, 'Oomph Girl' Ann Sheridan—who claims to be bored with that title—follows this official blueprint pretty closely. Height, 5 ft. 5 in.; weight, 120 pounds; bust, 34 inches; waist, 23 inches; hips 34½ inches. Which would seem to prove that emaciation is not indispensable to bodily beauty.

But the beauties on the screen and the photographs in her favourite movie magazine keep Miss Twenty emphatically figure conscious. If hers is a perfect size 12 or 14, well enough, but she wants to keep it that way. She frets audibly about the possibility of an extra quarter of an inch on her waistline. Her mother, who has struggled with dieting and 'daily dozens' to control her own wing-spread (and who also goes to the movies), understands this and is likely to say critically, 'Go easy on that dessert, Belinda. You know it is easier to *keep* it off than *get* it off!'

And to-day—as they always have—mothers keep saying, 'Do stand up straight!' As a matter of fact, the young woman of to-day is showing definite posture improvement over her predecessors. She has abandoned the 'debutante slouch', having learned that a caved-in attitude is the forerunner of defeatism. She has learned of those twin evils, lordosis and kyphosis, and, although she isn't quite sure which is which, she 'walks tall', straightens her back, and 'tucks in', hoping to avoid both.

Her complexion is better than in her schoolgirl days—partly because she is avoiding fats and sweets, partly because she gives her skin better care. She reads the beauty columns, the beauty advertising which appears all about her. Whether she has an allowance from her father or a \$15 a week pay cheque, she makes it stretch to include such

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cosmetics as lipstick, rouge, powder, one or more creams, manicuring supplies, a deodorant, and probably a bottle of toilet water. Gladly, if necessary, she will go without lunches for a week to pay for a permanent. On the other hand, if father is really generous, she will own duplicates of the make-up in different brands and shades, an astringent, a make-up base (especially if her skin is not altogether smooth), bath powder and salts, eye shadow and mascara for important dates, shampoo, brilliantine—and heaven knows *what*.

If a spattering of teen-age freckles still linger, there is a good deal of worry about them and private experiment with bleaching formulas—which won't work—and disguising make-up which will.

At her desk, or behind the counter, or wherever she spends most of her daytime hours, she wears her hair in a long, easy-to-do bob. She is, however, vastly interested in experimenting with rolls, pompadours, and up-dos for parties. If one of these experiments is unusually becoming, she will train her flexible young fingers to coif herself regularly in the new manner. Unlike her mother, who is dependent on the local hairdresser for setting her curls (to the tune of \$38,871,320 a year!), daughter becomes adept at doing it herself, from shampoo right through an ingenious row of pinned-down 'snails' to the final set.

She is cleverer, too, than her mother about her nails, and can change polish with as steady a hand as a professional. Show her any new make-up trick and she will have mastered it in no time, as, for instance, the adoption of the lipbrush and pencil. Having just learned that more definite lip outlines can be achieved with the help of these new implements—and that they come from Hollywood!—she is wasting no time in learning to wield them.

This year she does not pluck her eyebrows to a fine line or contort them into grotesque shapes. They are really

natural. She takes deodorants, antiperspirants, hand lotions, mouth-washes, and depilatories, as a matter of course. She has not yet entirely learned, however, that an immaculate person can be the result only of unremitting care, that a weekly application of deodorant or antiperspirant is not enough, that the daily bath must be supplemented by freshly laundered underwear and frequently cleaned outer garments.

Her other faults? They are several. Her voice is rarely good. It is too high, gets excited too easily. Her articulation is poor, and she talks too rapidly, and too much. She still has not learned, either, that skin faults are not cured by being covered. If she has a blotchy skin, she would rather try to camouflage it with heavy make-up than take time to treat it properly. Finally, the very enthusiasm which makes Miss America so refreshing sometimes runs wild, with exhausting effects on the bystander. Just a shade of toning down wouldn't hurt.

Until recently our fiction, movies, and advertising popularized the *young married woman* sheerly as a mother and housewife, throwing the spotlight of 'glamour' on the business- and play-girl alone. The attitude appeared to be that when a woman stepped in front of The Altar her social life went into a crescendo—and promptly died of it.

The mother and homemaker of the 1940's, with one child or four, has entirely different notions. She, too, admires the Glamour Girl; she, too, wants to be slim, active, to keep her husband's admiration, to be not just an onlooker at all that is lively and exciting.

So she is considerably concerned about her figure. She does not, for a minute, believe that silly, old-time idea that a woman's figure is the necessary sacrifice she makes for her babies. She knows, by looking around at her neighbours as well as from the books and magazines she

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reads, that lack of exercise, carelessness, self-indulgence may make her fat, with increasing years and family, but that it does not have to be that way.

If she belongs to the middle or upper income group, she has had from her own physician, with her first knowledge of her pregnancy, advice as to her diet, exercise, and general body discipline. If she cannot afford such services, she may, in most large cities, have exactly the same advice from a free maternity clinic.

Three of our How America Lives homemakers, Mrs. Griffin, Mrs. Case, and Mrs. McMillin, fall definitely into this young matron class. Their average age is about thirty-five. Among them they have borne seven children, of whom the oldest is ten.

These three successful wives and mothers weigh less than 120 pounds apiece. They are trim of hip and fleet of limb. Mrs. Case was formerly a star hockey player, Mrs. McMillin goes in for badminton, and Mrs. Griffin is an enthusiastic dancer.

And they are not marked exceptions. They are typical of a vast group—and the ideal of an even larger number. For homemakers to-day stay surprisingly young in appearance and in ideas. It isn't due to soft living on their part, or to any avoidance of housework. Quite the reverse: in these days when domestic service is scarce and expensive, and household appliances are offered on every hand on easy payment plans, more women seem to be doing their own work than ever before. Our Equipment Editor tells me that 95 per cent of American homes are taken care of by the wife without outside help.

This seems to indicate that housework, done in the proper way, compares favourably as a beautifying exercise with anything yet devised. Which is what doctors have been trying to tell us for years—only we wouldn't listen.

Mrs. Homemaker-in-her-thirties knows that the same

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spinach and orange juice prescribed for her baby is a help to her own skin and digestion, and she has discarded that old bugaboo about milk being fattening and frequently has a glass of it with the children at lunch.

Like her younger sister, she has two permanent waves a year, for which she pays less than \$5 each. She often washes her own hair with a shampoo, costing from 50 cents to \$1 a bottle, and then may go to the local beauty parlour to have it set. (The national expenditure for finger and marcel waves is over \$38,000,000, as against a mere \$2,000,000 for beauty shop shampoos!)

If she lives in the country, she does her own nails. If she is a townswoman, she may or may not have professional manicures. She likes nice perfume and depends on her husband's Christmas and birthday offerings to keep her supplied.

At the movies, which are her favourite form of entertainment, she secretly identifies herself with one or more of the glamorous stars, for she, too, is still young and attractive. Sometimes she wonders vaguely whether she might not have had a career if marriage and motherhood had not come along. . . . But she wouldn't really change for the world!

Changes in customs have brought a greater leisure to *the older woman*. Her children less frequently live under the parental roof after they marry, are having fewer children and having them later. She no longer automatically steps from the tasks of being a mother into the tasks of being a grandmother. Her own children raise their babies not only in a separate house, but according to their own modern plan.

It is in the top income group that she is most likely to wage a relentless war on the evidences of age, become the darling of the beauty parlours, spend a good part of her money and time testing creams, masks, chinstraps, baths,

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facials, corsets, and the countless types of reducing machines and diets. But in all income groups she is commencing to realize that age need not limit her activities, that the valuation she has placed on her appearance should not be lessened. Interests for which she has not had time while the responsibilities were heavy she now has the opportunity to follow. She is free to join in community activities, national organizations, follow up her long-ago dropped hobbies. She at last has time to expand her social contacts.

The older woman is ceasing to date herself by her coiffure or her clothes, to sink into indifference. She is mixing with her ties. Nor is this interest limited to any section of the country or to any income group. I have yet to find the walk of life in which mature women have not drawn me aside to ask about diets or about 'doing a little something' to their hair, or to confide to me that they had lovely skins as girls and would like to know a good cream to use now.

On the whole, the woman in the upper income range is more in need of conditioning at middle age than her less prosperous but more active sister who, not having eaten so richly and having been put to the necessity of doing her own errands, is in better running order.

In her forties, the composite, grooming-conscious woman is fighting weight. She is fortunate if she is not twenty pounds above her ideal (which is now considered to be the normal weight for a given height, at thirty). She is also fighting a sagging throat, a drying skin, and the general tendency of her face to give in to the law of gravity and droop. She worries about her hair. Shall she 'go grey'? Would anyone suspect it if she touched up the fading colour just a little? Within the past five years, however, she has answered the hair question in a new way. She has discovered that grey hair does not



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have to be limp and spiritless, but can be dramatic. And so the sales of blue or silvery rinses have tripled.

She is still proud, at forty, of her good 'American legs', although the feet beneath them give her plenty of trouble. It has been said that one per cent of our men have foot trouble, and only one per cent of our women do not! This in spite of the fact that our Average Woman is now wearing a size 6½ shoe, although she is likely to lie about it, even to the shoe clerk, who considers as typical the middle-aged woman who replied, when asked about her size, 'Well, I take a *four*, but a *five* feels so good I buy a *six*.'

Our matron has a favourite reducing diet which she knows would work if she could 'just stick to it', and . . . next week . . . she really must do something about it. In the meantime, she likes to comfort herself with the thought that there may be some physical defect which accounts for her weight. It is so much more interesting to be glandular than globular . . . or gluttonous!

She has also learned a few twisting and bending exercises which she does intermittently, and has had a good deal of nagging about posture. From time to time, she makes a determined effort to hold herself better, especially when she gets frightened by a number of slumped-down older women she sees.

Within recent years she has heard a lot of talk about the desirability of a woman being chic after forty, rather than pretty. Charm and Personality Courses have promised her that if she will develop her inner self, and thereby gain poise and a fascinating personality, she need never fear the competition of immaturity. Last week at a business luncheon I sat between two women in their seventies, active and successful career women . . . and grandparents. Both of them left their dessert untouched, explaining it was in the interest of their figures. One

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showed even greater discipline, and put saccharin in her coffee, saying that she and sugar and cream had long since parted company, on behalf of her hips.

This tremendous interest on the part of women of all ages in making the most of their looks seems to me a good thing. If, in our enthusiastic American way, we sometimes overdo it, even that is better than neglect. Our real danger lies, I think, in the possibility of sacrificing the individual to a standardized idea of beauty. There is too much yearning to be identified with 'a type'.

All women were not meant to be five feet six inches tall and to have chestnut hair and pink and white skins. Nor is the woman past forty being fair to herself when she tries to look, and act, like the twenty-year-old glamour girl of the moment. She should learn that, however youthful the spirit, the giddy trappings of youth are best left to the young, and that for her, in her maturity, is reserved the greater privilege of a richly developed personality. And *all* women should learn that the first step toward beauty is to awaken their own possibilities, not to try to masquerade in some alien personality and form.

The need of the American woman is to learn to set as her goal her own idealized self.

LOUISE PAINE BENJAMIN

## HOUSES AMERICA LIVES IN

THE dwellings of America that you see as you cross and recross the continent in all directions are not in the aggregate anything you would care to write home about. Occasionally there are countryside and village glimpses of simple, honest architecture; but the landscape inevitably becomes cluttered, and you slow down for cities in a welter of wretched residential rows. By then you decide that good houses go singly and in scattered groups; that the bad and mediocre march in regiments and armies.

As I covered the country to look at what America lives in, my mind was on the typical house. It helped my perspective to keep in mind the fact as well that here was a nation that spent three billion dollars a year on new homes, but spent an equal amount on ice cream, confectionery, and soft drinks, and considerably more on buying new automobiles. I was out getting close-ups of a dozen different families in a dozen different homes, and each home, from the country house with twenty rooms to the sharecropper's cabin with twenty occupants, was typical of its category. And this preoccupation with these probably average dwellings was no doubt the reason why I found myself paying special attention to that whole vast overlooked average, all along the line—those houses by the million, you might say, that have never made the magazines; that have never known what it was to have an architect; that haven't got enough cupboards; that are hard to heat; that leak; that are so poorly planned the housewife walks an extra hundred miles a year between the front door and the kitchen, and whose style, if any, could only be called either late or early Reminiscence.

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It was out of homes like these, I thought—out of the mistakes they'd made, out of the bitter lessons they could teach—that the new and better homes for this country would come.

If you are out looking for the Miss America of houses, you're likely to lose sight of the typical. Your eyes are trained upon the fine, the smart, the slick and original, which comprise, at a generous estimate, less than 10 per cent of the total number of dwellings. In book after book, magazine after magazine, that 10 per cent is practically all you see. You don't have to be told about the wonders of our Colonial houses—of all that white perfection in New England, of what the Dutch did with such solidity and snugness between the Hudson and the Delaware, or of the stately lines and pink-cheeked brick from Philadelphia south. You will have heard about the elegance of Natchez and the laciness of New Orleans, and of the naïve simplicity which a hundred years ago sprinkled Greek temples for people to live in all over New York, Ohio, and Michigan. And you will be aware that it was the strength of that whole tradition which has given to the conventional house architecture of this country whatever breeding there has been in it ever since. And on this side of that tradition you will keep an eye open for the modern best as well; not merely what has beautifully followed the patterns of the past, but what is following the pattern of life in this new age.

There we have the fine originals, the well-done adaptations, and the intelligent modern as distinguished from the stupid. If you are out looking for the best, you will find it in one of those categories; but you will have to pick your way carefully across the country to find it, for the best houses lie off the beaten track. Whereas those regiments and armies of the average you can't

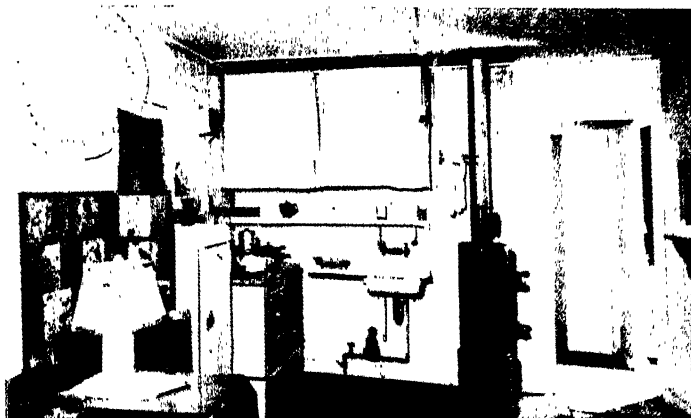


Most of America's houses are not up to the Handevidt homestead (above) or the attractive Griffin house (below). New homes for millions of American families will be needed in the years ahead. Those for low-income families like the Carrs, O'Briens, Braceys, and Gillespies will probably have to be government-financed.





A five-room dwelling unit in this Jacksonville project (top) rents for \$10 a month, and fifty mass-produced houses with attractive living-room kitchens, two bedrooms and bath (bottom) have been erected at Fort Wayne, Indiana. They rent for \$10.83 a month.



very well avoid, taking any straight line, like a plane or train, and letting the cross section come where it will. The average, the typical, will tell you plainly what has to be done; the best will point out ways to do it.

What makes an average, or worse than average, house; or what makes it good, better, best, is the way it meets the triple test: stability, utility, beauty. The sixteen dwelling units that house the families of this book, taken as a whole, might not pass the test with flying colours, but the group mark would certainly be above whatever mark all this nation's twenty-five million dwelling structures taken together might attain. For after all, the Wilson and Guthrie houses, the Griffin and Case, are to quite a degree, each in its own category, comfortable, able-bodied, and presentable. And many of the others have their merits. But when it comes to all the houses in the country, the estimate of authorities on the matter of stability alone puts less than 40 per cent in good condition. As for beauty, 80 per cent have been built without an architect, which should have a great deal to do with the general unattractiveness of the average design. While as for livability, in one regard alone, between 15 and 20 per cent of all urban dwellings are without inside plumbing facilities—which doesn't hold a candle to the situation of farm-homes, of which only thirty per cent have running water indoors. In fact, less than half of the dwelling units in this country are equipped with baths; California having a higher percentage than any other state.

The faults our fifteen families had to find with their homes were in close proportion, both in kind and in quantity, to the criticisms brought out in a recent nationwide questionnaire among six hundred homeowners. This pool on the failings of the average house will have a familiar ring. Four hundred and twenty-two gave as their first complaint a lack of cupboard space. This

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matches up with the fact that more than four out of six houses have never had architectural attention. Two hundred and forty-nine said they couldn't heat the house evenly, which is why a million homes have been insulated in the past ten years. Two hundred and nineteen said there weren't enough electric points; a hundred and ninety-three, that the rooms made it hard to arrange the furniture; a hundred and five that there wasn't any place for the children's playthings—all planning deficiencies. A hundred and thirty-two said the house was draughty; insulation again. Sixty-two said there wasn't enough sunlight, though the glass industry, largely through wider use of glass in building, has increased production 30 per cent since 1929. Only nine out of six hundred said that water didn't flow freely from the taps.

These figures do not paint a very flattering portrait of the average house. But there are other facts and figures which lead us to believe that the portrait is improving, and will continue, increasingly, to do so. One of these is the growing effectiveness of the Federal Housing Administration's rather rigid requirements as to architectural standards. These standards must be met in the design, construction, and equipment of any house whose mortgage loan is to be insured by this government agency, which has now helped finance over six hundred thousand new homes and almost three million improvements. It is only natural to suppose that for purely practical reasons, other building loan organizations, which haven't already, will adopt these standards whether they seek government insurance or not.

This FHA rating, which determines the insurability of any home financing so far as the government is concerned, amounts to a total of 100 points. The greatest number of points given to any one factor is rightly given to Structural Soundness—25 points. This factor covers



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'the ability of all structural members, materials, and methods . . . to withstand the imposed loads'; and if the FHA inspector does his job properly here, the house will at least stand up for a good long lifetime without sagging. Still in the department of stability, the next 10 points are given to Resistance to Elements, and deals with the ability of the house to protect itself against weather, fire, decay, corrosion, and insects, items which help make half a million homes unfit for use each year. Five points go to Resistance to Use, which makes a total of forty points, out of a hundred, given to the general question of strength.

Forty points are devoted likewise to the general classification of utility—the planning, the shape, size, and arrangement of rooms, and their accessibility to each other; the quality and completeness of the mechanical and convenience equipment, and the general indoor sunniness and airiness.

That leaves twenty points out of the hundred for Architectural Attractiveness. But don't think this item is left entirely to the personal taste of the owner, architect, or contractor. For architectural attractiveness means different things to different people; and it can mean one thing now and something else ten years from now. Just as the success or failure of FHA's guarantee will depend upon the general suitability and durability of the house and equipment, so, too, will it depend upon the present and future appeal of the architectural appearance. For this reason freakish designs are not only frowned upon—they aren't even permitted under FHA standards. There can be no superfluous ornament, no garish colours, no architectural styles that, like so many we have suffered in the past fifty years, are merely passing fancies. In addition, FHA emphasizes to every applicant the wisdom of procuring architectural advice. In other words, the

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hard facts of financing have finally been geared to good taste. The house that is simple and unpretentious to-day is not likely to be funny to-morrow and, what is important to the FHA, it will still be a good investment.

There are, of course, other things that go into good house architecture than just those elements of the individual house which have been touched upon. For instance, the vitally important question of community planning. If you will glance out of the window of your train as you approach almost any large town or city, the chances are you will see thickening masses of poor design, like an epidemic—for architecture, you know, is contagious. And in sections that have grown at any time with great rapidity, where quick profits have been more important than intelligent planning, the bad-house disease gets out of control. Houses built quickly in large quantities to meet a sudden demand must account for most of the bad dwellings in this country to-day, though there is no reason why speed should leave beauty behind.

The first thing that you find out is that good houses take intelligent planning; not only of the houses themselves but of the communities in which houses are to be built. Most sites, for instance, are unnecessarily narrow, and often ridiculously deep in proportion; and while a small, single-family house can, of course, be built on a 25 ft. site—as millions must have been—neither the house nor the family is allowed sufficient elbow room. Widening the low-cost building site, in order to get air and elbow room between the houses and give the architecture a chance to develop normally, can be achieved without increasing the square-footage, by the simple process of lessening the depth. Nor is there any necessity in the open country, where most inexpensive subdivisions occur, to fall back always on rectangular rigidity, to set every house on the same monotonous front line, and

remove every mark of nature from the landscape. Let the houses look alike, if that will keep down the cost and thus make home-owning possible to more people; but don't make them stand there stiffly at attention like a regiment drawn up for inspection—only here in dead earnest, for life. There can be curves, diagonals, breaks, recesses, and open spaces, like sighs of relief; there can be trees and grass and places for playing, and there don't have to be cruel crossings on the way to school. The final worth and beauty of a house, right along with the pleasure and dignity of living, all depend a great deal upon environment; and environment is something that has to be planned and preserved. New communities are being laid out all the time, and quickly covered with houses. The bad ones are made on a shoestring, with a rubber-stamp pattern pressed down upon the countryside. Into the good ones go foresight, intelligence, and the beating of the heart for humanity.

Experts declare that if we were going to replace unfit shelter with decent homes, and at the same time take care of population increase, we would have to build at the rate of a million dwelling units a year until 1950. That would be a lot of building; and in addition to its beneficial results in the sociological sense, it should create interesting architectural developments. Mass production would undoubtedly play an enormous part in any big-scale housing programme, which would mean more standardization of parts (for instance, there are now more than six hundred styles and sizes of window sash, where one-fourth that number would be sufficient). It would mean greater and greater use of prefabrication (which now accounts for less than half of one per cent of all new houses), together with increased simplicity in style. It is consequently almost certain that the present trend away from the emphasis on the great variety of period styles and

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colloquial types—styles and types which have characterized our houses to a degree—would be accelerated.

From the purely practical point of view there can be little doubt that a house which sets out to be a certain kind of house so far as style is concerned—Cape Cod, Dutch Colonial, Cotswold, Regency, Tudor, Italian, Spanish, or whatever—must make certain concessions in functional form to the style it decides to adopt. This handicap imposed on a house by arbitrarily giving it a certain style of architecture can rightly be called a handicap to-day because it impedes the free and most efficient use of many modern building methods and materials which might otherwise, though not necessarily in every case, have been helpful in making the house more livable, less expensive, or longer lived.

For example, you decide to build a house in the Regency manner, which is having a minor revival at the moment. To do this with any purity of exterior style you must concede a certain symmetry in the placing of doors and windows, restrict yourself as to the number and size of the openings for those doors and windows; you must give the roof a certain pitch regardless, and you must provide certain decorative features in order to complete the identification. Indoors, then, your arrangement is bound to be somewhat determined for you by where the doors and windows come. If you are willing to accept these limitations in the size and shape of your rooms, and the way these limitations may affect your living, you will have achieved your conception of the kind of home you want. And in order to surround yourself with this aura of a special style that attracted you, you will no doubt be more than willing to put up with minor imperfections in absolute functionalism.

The same thing is true of the people who are attracted

by the charm of an old farmhouse in the country. Remodelling and modernization will, of course, improve its livability to a considerable extent, though the restrictions of the original form will always be felt. But in both cases—the new Regency house and the old farmhouse remodelled—there will be for those who prefer the ‘feel’ of a certain style or of a certain kind of charm, sufficient compensation for whatever disadvantages such houses might have from a purely functional point of view.

For others there is the house that is to operate primarily as a machine for living. In it are abandoned all preconceived notions of an exterior style which might in any way affect the planning, and it proceeds first along the lines of getting the most convenient and workable layout of rooms possible. The number, size, shape, and arrangement of the rooms will not have to be governed by any predetermined pattern, but only by what will work, and by what the house must cost. Along with being planned exactly to fit a certain set of living requirements, it should be possible, for instance, in such an unhampered house, to install a heating system and plumbing system (the average two-storey house has three hundred feet of concealed piping) which would really perform at full efficiency, as theoretically neither would have to be awkwardly bent to fit a mould that antedated the latest developments in such equipment. Windows would be located not according to the requirements of a style or period, but where they would take full advantage of the sunlight at all seasons, and of the prevailing airs. If there were no necessity for two or more adjoining rooms to be entirely separated by permanent partitions, these could be made movable, or eliminated altogether. Such a house would, then, from its living quarters inside shape to a great extent its outside appearance. The beauty and charm of this appearance would depend largely, then, upon the taste

and skill of the architect. Its style would not be something imposed upon it from the past, but would be created for it by the real necessities and opportunities of the present.

You have only to realize that about 40 per cent of the cost of a house to-day goes into mechanical and sanitary equipment (particularly that which comes from the billion-dollar-a-year heating and plumbing industry), to see how important is this proper functioning for comfort and convenience. People who go out shopping for a house, according to the best real estate opinion, are chiefly concerned (especially the women) with how well the house works. One large operator, for instance, tells how his house sales jumped when he installed warm-air blowers in the bathrooms, for drying the hair. It is perfectly possible that this concern for the running qualities of a house may remove some of the emphasis that has heretofore been placed on style.

At any rate, there are two approaches to building a house: fitting yourself into a pattern with variations; letting your living requirements create the pattern and the style. The former is a habit so firmly fixed in most of us that it may take a long time to change; the latter will require the infiltration of this fresh point of view among architects and home builders everywhere before it becomes the rule rather than the exception. So the drift from one to the other will probably not be rapid.

Not nearly so rapid, naturally, as the rate at which we shall be building. We can expect most of the millions of the houses that will go up in the next ten years to follow our Colonial patterns, though the chances are that the growing tendency will be to make these styles adapt themselves to structural innovations. No matter how inevitable modern design may be, it will not by any means all at once supersede those familiar forms in

popular appeal. People just can't change overnight their conception of what a house should look like.

In this connection it is interesting to note that a pool of the country's leading building supply firms, who had systematically questioned their customers on their style preferences, showed that 31 per cent of the people about to build were planning Cape Cod cottages; 23 per cent other types of Colonial; 9 per cent modern, and 2 per cent Spanish. The rest couldn't make up their minds.

Perhaps only one out of five of these new homes will receive an architect's individual attention in design and supervision, as indeed has always been the case. But as the requirements of financing agencies raise the standards of building and design and as home builders recognize more and more the cash value of good design, the quality of stock plans, from which most low-cost homes are built, is bound to improve.

For one of the chief handicaps to good house architecture has been the unavailability of competent architectural advice—plus, of course, the shortsightedness of home builders who don't realize the value of this advice. There are only ten thousand architects in the United States, of whom less than half go in for houses; and most of these men practise in metropolitan areas. Naturally a million dwelling units a year is more than could be individually designed by five thousand architects. So a great deal will have to be done from ready-made plans. It is not enough that the contractor or the prospective home-owner himself procure a set of even excellent stock plans from one of the many sources. Expert architecture advice on the spot would help enormously in adapting these plans to the special characteristics of the site and the occupants as well. Young, well-trained architects, who now languish in large cities, might very well consider the possibility of a country practice (like a young doctor),